

THE WINNERS! OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure



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EDITOR'S LETTER

MAKING BIG DECISIONS

Life can be full of surprises. When we launched the latest Outdoor Photographer of the Year (OPOTY) competition last October I had no idea that we would see such a large number of truly outstanding images entered.

Of course, we knew there would be plenty, but the final tally was quite overwhelming. Having this snapshot of what is going on in the various genres of outdoor photography, I can confidently say that there are an unprecedented number of talented photographers at work, both here in the UK and around the globe.

So, how did we manage to get the massive number of entries down to the final seven category-winning ones that you see in this issue (*page 53*)?

The judges for OPOTY have remained relatively unchanged since the inception of the competition, a deliberate policy. Having a positive dynamic and deep knowledge and trust among the panel is essential in what can be a tense and challenging all-day session. This year, we added to the team David Baker, overall winner of OPOTY 2012 and one of the most

respected and creative landscape photographers in the UK today, as I knew he would bring a different approach and eye to the other judges.

The session was brutal; there's no other way to describe it. So many great photographs – all of which I would be happy to publish in the magazine – were gone in the first round.

As the day wore on, we were locked in rigorous discussion about images that grabbed our attention more than others, trying to work out what they had that the others didn't.

Eventually, discussion had to stop and tough decisions had to be made. We all felt the simultaneous joy and pain of these seven images surviving and the handful of equally worthy photographs falling at the final hurdle.

I've always found with judging that after seeing all there is on offer, it's almost impossible to pick one image per category that sums up the impact of the entire collection. This time, though, I think these ones do ably represent the whole.



Steve Watkins

GET IN TOUCH

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COVER IMAGE

Sandi Bertoncelj, winner of the OPOTY Live the Adventure category took this powerful image of a skier pausing before dropping into a chute in Slovenia. Find out how to take your own great adventure photos on *page 28*.

THE ISSUE at a glance



Nature guru Laurie Campbell chats with Niall Benvie – *page 18*



Alex Buisse shows us how to get awesome adventure shots – *page 28*



Lee Frost has some hot tips for photographing aurora – *page 34*



Andy Luck tests Sony's RX100 MkIII to see if it outguns its rivals – *page 92*

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At the heart of the image





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OP columnist Laurie Campbell has dedicated his life to recording Scotland's wildlife, and he recently received the RSPB's Lifetime Achievement Award. Niall Benvie gets an insight into the man behind the incredible images

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 12 MARCH 2015

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» Chris Weston's new series: A photographer's guide to life on Earth

» How to make the most of natural light in the landscape

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IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...

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Theo Bosboom is an award-winning landscape and nature photographer based in the Netherlands. In 2013 he gave up his job as a lawyer to become a full-time professional photographer; a step he hasn't regretted for one second so far.

theobosboom.nl

18 + 70



With more than 30 years' experience of photographing Scottish wildlife, **Laurie Campbell's** creative aim is simple, to share his passion for Scotland's landscapes, flora and fauna. He regularly leads nature photography workshops, and his images are widely published.

lauriecampbell.com

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Niall Benvie has photographed and written about the natural world and our relationship with it, professionally, for over 20 years. He is co-founder of the international photography project Meet Your Neighbours.

niallbenvie.com

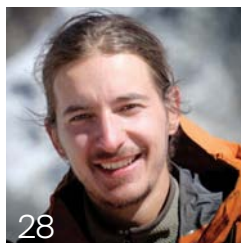
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Greg Annandale is a travel and landscape photographer loosely based in Bristol. He has been on ski touring expeditions across the Swedish Arctic, and has taken part in mountaineering trips to the Alps and the Russian Altai mountains. He is a qualified divemaster and has also worked as a cycling guide.

gregannandale.com

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Alex Buisse is an award-winning adventure photographer based in Chamonix, France. He works with skiers, climbers, base jumpers and paragliders, and practises most of the sports he shoots. His clients include Patagonia, Arc'teryx, Red Bull, Petzl and Montane, and he has written three books on adventure photography.

alexandrebusse.org

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Over the last 20 years, **Lee Frost** has established himself as one of the UK's leading landscape and travel photographers and one of the world's bestselling photography authors. He also leads sell-out photo workshops and tours.

leefrost.co.uk

42



Andrew Ray is a full-time professional photographer based in Cornwall, who specialises in UK landscape images. His work has been widely published, and he has won numerous national competitions and awards.

andrewrayphotography.com

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David Chapman is a landscape and wildlife photographer based in Cornwall. He has written 11 photography books and regularly gives talks and runs workshops. He recently completed a one-year commission photographing Land's End.

davidchapman.org.uk

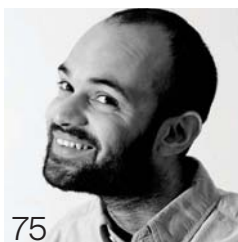
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David Ward has spent 25 years travelling the world in search of that special moment to immortalise in an image. He now passes his knowledge on to others through photographic tours and workshops.

into-the-light.com

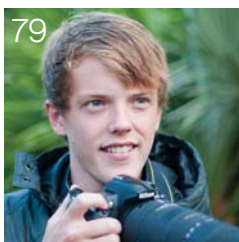
75



Tomos Brangwyn is a wildlife photographer who lives on the banks of the river Wandle in south London. A former professional news photographer, he has made films on kingfishers with the BBC Natural History Unit. His other clients include the Daily Mail, the Guardian and BBC Wildlife Magazine.

tomosbrangwyn.com

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Sam Rowley is a young wildlife photographer from London, with almost 10 years' experience. He has more than 20 awards to his name, including winning a category of Wildlife Photographer of the Year. He is currently studying biology at Bristol University.

sam-rowley.com

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Andy Luck is an award-winning wildlife short programme producer, and also an environmental photojournalist with a passion for cameras and photography. His work has been widely published, and he is a regular contributor to OP.

wildopeneye.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Sandi Bertone 500px.com/berto, **Nick Smith** nicksmithphoto.com, **Steve Young** birdsonfilm.com, **Stephen Spraggon** spraggonphotography.co.uk, **Aiden MacCormick** maragorm.com, **Paul Holloway** paulhollowayphotography.co.uk, **Ian Hufton** ianhuftonphotography.co.uk, **Esen Tunar** esentunar.com, **Keith Fergus** scottishhorizons.co.uk, **Graham Dunn** grahamdunn.co.uk, **Carlton Doudney**

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A nun at Shwedagon Pagoda.raw



I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THERE'S A DECISIVE MOMENT FOR EVERY PHOTOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITY;

That split second when all the elements within the frame combine in unrepeatable harmony. I'd been waiting for over an hour, shuffling by the tripod, hoping that someone interesting would walk through my frame. I'd pre-visualised the shot on a visit the previous day, and now, on the last day of what had been an unforgettable month in Burma I was ready as the first sunlight of the day crept down the golden spires. Normally when shooting reportage I'll work hand held in order to remain flexible and move quickly, but the composition for this shot demanded intricate attention to detail, plus the use of a super wide tilt and shift lens to keep all the strong verticals in the scene parallel to the frame margins. Such a lens with its extreme wide angle of view and bulbous front element would normally preclude the use of filters, but using LEE's special adaptor produced specifically for the Canon 17mm TS-E lens enabled me to fit the graduated filter I needed to control the contrast between the bright, sunlit spires and the courtyard still in shadow.

Just as I was starting to lose faith that the shoot would work I saw the nun approaching. The colour of her robes and the black umbrella she was carrying were perfect; please, please let her walk this way. She hit her mark as if scripted and I hit the shutter on my cable release. Instantly I knew the shot had worked and warm, intense satisfaction suffused through my soul. I scrolled back though the few frames I'd exposed; hopeful I'd captured the Decisive Moment. It was only then, when I saw on the camera's monitor the black shape of the bird in the sky that I realised quite how decisive a moment it had been.



LEE 0.9 ND soft grad filter



LEE Adaptor Ring for Canon 17mm TS-E Lens and LEE Filter Holder



Canon 5D mkIII, 17mm TS-E lens, 1/100sec @ f8, ISO 200

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Landmannalaugar, Iceland, in winter

by Theo Bosboom

I have been curious for many years about how winter looks in the difficult to access highlands of Iceland, so I decided to arrange a transfer by big-wheeled super jeep to Landmannalaugar for a week of photography. There was a lot of snow, covering large parts of the landscape. But in some areas the colours and shapes of the rhyolite mountains were visible through the snow, including in a small gorge close to the hut, shown here. The colours added some nice contrast in the otherwise almost black and white landscape.





NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION

NEW LAUNCHES

COMPETITIONS

OUTDOORS

TECHNOLOGY

OTHER NEWS



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New forensic technique to help fight bird crime

Forensic scientists at Abertay University in Dundee have developed a way of recovering fingerprints from the feathers of birds of prey, which are under threat from illegal poisoning, shooting and trapping. If the birds have been handled, the method could enable police to identify the perpetrator.

Lead scientist Dennis Gentles said: 'There are some surfaces where recovering fingerprints remains elusive – human and animal skin, for example. And, until now, feathers were on that list. We were keen to see if we could develop a method that produced consistent results and could be used by the police in an investigation.'

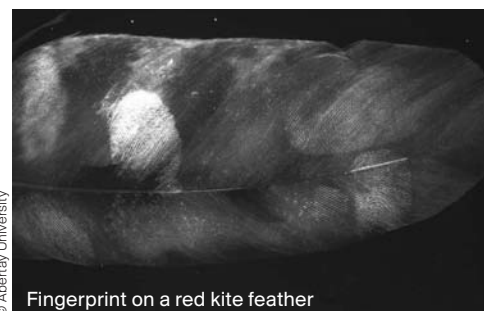
The team revealed for the first time that incriminating marks could be lifted from a bird's feathers using fluorescent fingerprint powders. Dr Gentles explained that this method gave the

best results because it glows under a laser light, isolating the print from the background.

Fingerprints were successfully recovered from six species of birds of prey: kestrel, sparrowhawk, buzzard, red kite, golden eagle and white-tailed eagle. Using black magnetic powder, the team also lifted prints from birds' eggs, which could help police to track down and prosecute illegal collectors.

Since 2006, over 2,500 incidents of wildlife crime involving or targeting wild birds of prey in the UK have been reported to the RSPB, including rare species such as golden eagles, hen harriers and red kites. The illegal trapping and killing of wild birds is also an issue elsewhere in Europe and in other parts of the world.

Ian Thomson from RSPB Scotland commented: 'While government laboratory testing has made it relatively straightforward to identify the cause of death of the victims in many cases, identifying the perpetrator of offences that often take place in some of the remotest areas of our countryside continues to be very difficult. This work carried out by Abertay University is a great step forward in the development of forensic techniques and can only assist in the fight against those who threaten some of our most iconic raptors.' abertay.ac.uk



© Abertay University

Fingerprint on a red kite feather

Great Christmas gear giveaway: the winners

In our December 2014 issue (OP186) we gave you the chance to win some of the fantastic products featured in our 'Gearing up' special. Here are the lucky winners:

- » **Mr J Hunt**, Middlesbrough
Therm-A-Rest Z Seat
- » **Stuart Reid**, Mannings Heath
Jetboil Joule
- » **Oliver Daniels**, Stourport-on-Severn
Lee Filters field pouch
- » **David Kirkpatrick**, Leighton Buzzard
Hilleberg Enan
- » **Simon Munton**, Midsomer Norton
Berghaus Explorer Ridge Plus
- » **Wendy Newing**, Yelverton
DexShell Wading Socks
- » **Brian Berry**, Ashby de la Zouch
Rite in the Rain notepad
- » **Rachel Clayton**, Norwich
Nikon SB-500
- » **Stewart Mcausland**, Solihull
Fjällräven Barents Pro
- » **Alistair Scott**, Switzerland
Ventura 14W Solar Panel SPV140
- » **Dr Tony Cooper**, Melton Mowbray
Wildlife Watching C80R lens cover
- » **Michael Wilson**, Hemel Hempstead
Powermonkey Explorer 2
- » **Mark Evans**, Stottesdon
BioLite KettleCharge
- » **Adrian Trendall**, Crowthorne
Sealskinz Dragoneye
- » **Keith Sanders**, Longniddry
LowePro Hardside 300 Photo
- » **Keith Collie**, Wexford, Ireland
MindShift Rotation 180° Trail

And finally, the winner of the Vixen Polaris Star Tracker is Paul Dann from Liverpool, who correctly told us that Polaris is the star that the Polaris uses to rotate parallel to Earth's orbit.



Thank you to everyone who entered, and congratulations to our winners – your prizes are on their way!

COMPETITIONS

British Wildlife Photography Awards: call for entries

The 2015 British Wildlife Photography Awards are open for entries. Now in its seventh year, the competition covers every aspect of wildlife in Britain – from animal behaviour, urban fauna and the marine environment to botanical subjects and the hidden world that lies in the undergrowth – and celebrates the work of both amateur and professional photographers. Winning images are chosen from 16 different categories, and prizes include products from Canon, and a £5,000 cash prize for the overall winner. Winners and commended entrants will also have their work showcased in a touring exhibition and published in a stunning book.

OP Editor's Pick

As the entries are uploaded to the BWPA website we will choose one OP Editor's Pick winner from the images submitted during each of the calendar months of February, March, April and May. The winning images will be published in the book, *British Wildlife Photography Awards: Collection 6*, and in our BWPA showcase in OP later this year.

OP readers' discount

Until midnight on 28 February 2015, when you purchase four entry credits on the BWPA website (allowing you to submit up to 10 images), you can receive an extra credit for free – simply use the voucher code **OPMAR15**. So, if you want to enter 20 images in the Adult Competition, for example, you can pay for just 10. Each credit costs £5, and all of the fees are fully explained on the BWPA website.

The competition is open until 2 May. To find out more and to enter, please visit bwpawards.org



The winner of the Wildlife in HD category will receive a Canon XA-20 professional camcorder

'A Tender Moment' (Great-crested grebe), by Ben Andrew



Insight Astronomy Photography of the Year 2015 opens

The annual search for the world's most beautiful and spectacular visions of the cosmos has begun. With a new title sponsor in the form of European investment manager Insight Investment, the 2015 Insight Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition has a host of new categories, including Our Sun; Stars and Nebulae; and Galaxies. Categories such as Skyscapes and Aurorae invite images of the night sky closer to home. The overall winner will receive £2,500, and there are also cash prizes for the runners-up and commended photographers.

The competition is open until 16 April 2015, and the winning images will be showcased in an exhibition at the Royal Observatory Greenwich later this year. Submit your astro images at rmg.co.uk/astrophoto

CES 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Each year the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas showcases the most exciting and innovative technologies around, and January's event was no exception. Here are some of the products that grabbed our attention...



Zano nano drone

Controlled via a mobile app, this palm-sized drone can reach speeds of 25mph, promises 10-15 minutes of continuous flight time and uses a 5MP HD camera to record stills and video footage. It goes on sale later this year with an SRP of £169.95.

Toshiba NFC built-in SDHC Memory Card

Toshiba launched the first memory card with NFC (near field communication): simply tap the card with your Android mobile device (using the free, dedicated app) to view 16 thumbnail images and to see available storage. The 8GB, 16GB and 32GB SDHC cards are set to go on sale in February (prices to be announced). Toshiba also updated its Wi-Fi-enabled FlashAir SD cards, which let you stream photos from the card to your Android or iOS device. The FlashAir III Wireless SD cards will be available from March, costing \$79.99 for 16GB and \$99.99 for 32GB.

Nikon D5500

Nikon's first ever touchscreen camera, the DX-format D5500, features a 24.2MP sensor, an ISO range of 100-25,600, built-in Wi-Fi, a 39-point AF system and up to 5fps shooting. Using the vari-angle touchscreen, it's possible to focus and shoot, or adjust settings. The D5500 is on sale now and costs from £639.99 (body only).



HP curved monitors

HP brought its new range of curved monitors to the show, designed to provide an immersive widescreen experience. The 3K-resolution Z34c monitor has a 32-inch display, a 178° viewing angle, 3000:1 contrast ratio and 'low haze screen enhancement' to reduce reflectiveness and maintain clarity. It is expected to go on sale in April and will cost \$999. HP also showcased its new 5K-resolution Z27q monitor, which rivals Apple's 5K Retina iMac. It launches in March and will cost \$1,299.



Seagate Archive 8TB HDD

Capable of handling up to 200,000 40MB images, the Seagate Archive 8TB HDD is the first affordable, high-density hard drive. It costs around £165 and is on sale now. Smaller capacity versions (5TB and 6TB) are also available.

Samsung Portable SSD T1

Measuring just over 7x5cm (smaller than a credit card), the Samsung Portable SSD T1 is more expensive than a regular-sized hard drive but takes up no room in a kit bag and has a generous 1TB of storage. The device is also available with 250GB or 500GB. Samsung says the 250GB drive will cost \$179.99, while the 1TB version will set you back \$599.99.

Connect Station CS100

Acting as a central hub for up to 1TB of content, the Connect Station CS100 makes it possible to save, view and share photos and movies wirelessly. The device will be available from June with an SRP of £199.



OUT THERE

IN PRINT

Animal Earth: The amazing diversity of living creatures

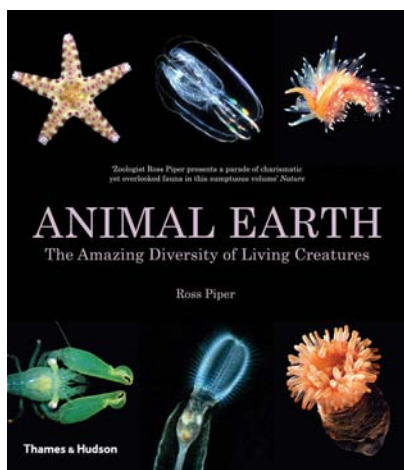
Ross Piper

» *Thames & Hudson*

» ISBN 978-0500291658

» £19.95, paperback

BOOK
OF THE
MONTH

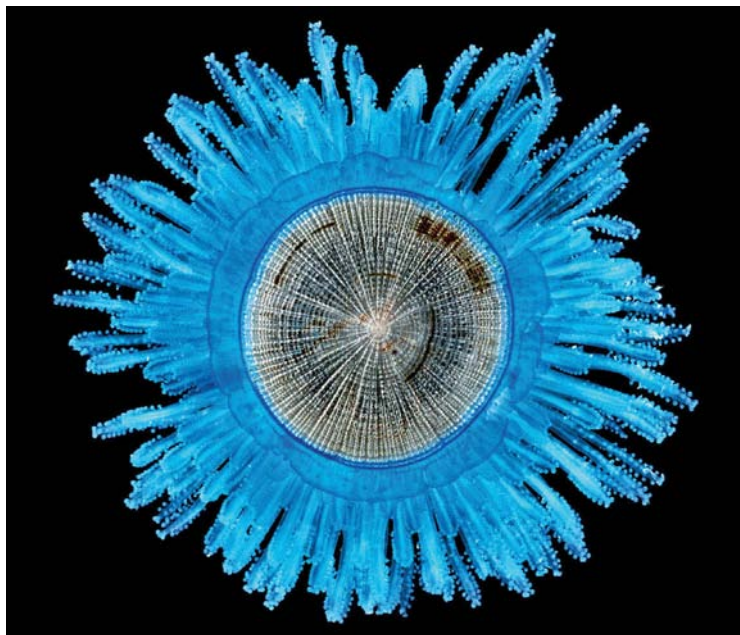


When we think of the animal kingdom, the more charismatic creatures, such as mammals, amphibians and reptiles, are normally what spring to mind. BBC presenter and author Ross Piper explains in his latest book how these account for only 4% of the roughly 1.5 million known animals on Earth. Shifting the focus to those species that often go unnoticed, *Animal Earth: The amazing diversity of living creatures* is an encyclopaedic book that traces the 35 different lineages of animals we share our planet with.

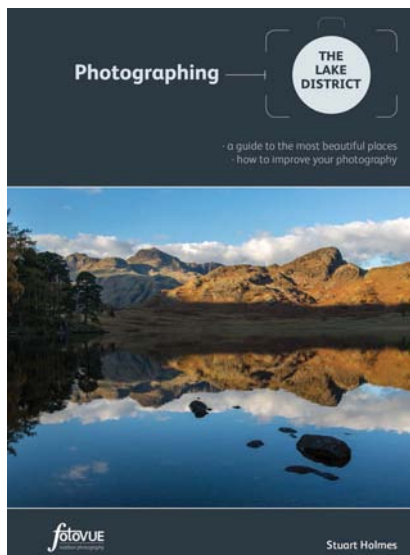
At 320 pages, and with a wealth of information throughout, reading this book from cover to cover in one sitting is a formidable task, but its 540 colour images and engaging diagrams make the book more accessible; it is an ideal reference book to dip in and out of. Piper's clear message that each species is vital to maintaining our ecosystem's equilibrium runs through the book, and he opens up fascinating questions about how many more different creatures there are for us to discover. This is a fascinating book that will stir anyone's interest in nature's curiosities.



The compound eyes of a cynipid wasp, by Tomas Rak



A floating colony of Cnidaria, an aquatic phylum, by Arthur Anker



Photographing the Lake District

Stuart Holmes

» *FotoVue*

» ISBN 978-0992905101

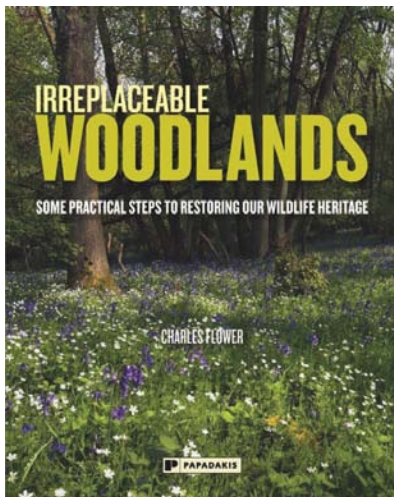
» £25, paperback

With its luscious landscapes, undulating hills and serene lakes, the Lake District is a mecca for artists, photographers and outdoor enthusiasts. At almost 900 square miles in size, the area has thousands of spectacular viewpoints for you to enjoy, but where do you start? In his latest guidebook, photographer and founding director of FotoVue Publishing Stuart Holmes helps you to seek out, explore and make the most of 70 of the best locations.

Organised into seven sections according to area, each location is examined in detail. Information includes the best time of day to visit, seasonal highlights and detailed maps. The book also includes a technique section to help you improve your photography skills.

Having lived in the Lakes his whole life, and with 30 years' experience as a professional photographer, Holmes' knowledge and passion for the area make him the ideal guide. With 350 stunning images, and the right size to fit neatly into your backpack, *Photographing the Lake District* will become your go-to reference when wanting to enhance your outdoor experiences in this inspiring part of England.

NATURAL THINKERS

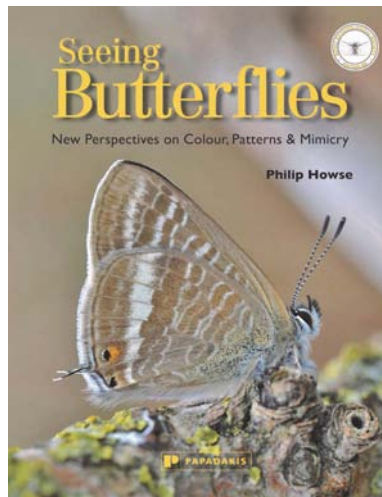
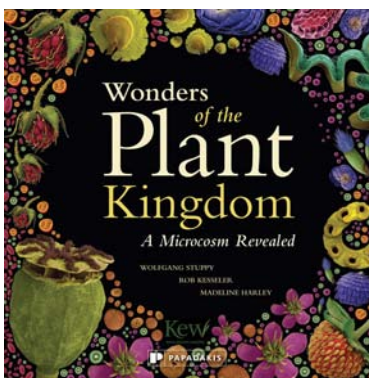


A great way to take your images to the next level is to read about new ideas, projects and processes relating to your subject. We've chosen three nature books that help to broaden our understanding of the natural world...

Wonders of the Plant Kingdom: A microcosm revealed Wolfgang Stuppy, Rob Kessler and Madeline Harley

» Papadakis
» ISBN 978-1906506476
» £19.99, paperback

After looking at the first few pages of this stunning book, you might begin to see the world in a completely different way. Two botanists and an artist, all experts in their fields, have teamed up to create a visually enchanting look at the microcosm of plants. The pictures, all set against a dramatic black background, show each subject in remarkable detail and provide an inviting accompaniment to the scientific text. With its engaging design, *Wonders of the Plant Kingdom* reveals how flowers disseminate their pollen, and explores the remarkable way in which the pollinated flower turns into a fruit to disperse its seeds.



Irreplaceable Woodlands: Some practical steps to restoring our wildlife heritage Charles Flower

» Papadakis
» ISBN 978-1906506537
» £25, paperback

In this beautiful book, Charles Flower shares his efforts to restore a 25-acre ancient woodland. Ideal for those wanting to learn more about these rich ecosystems, *Irreplaceable Woodlands* will be a valuable addition to any nature enthusiast's collection. Mike Bailey and Steve Williams' illustrative photographs are shown to full effect thanks to the high-quality production.

Seeing Butterflies: New perspectives on colour, patterns and mimicry Philip Howse

» Papadakis
» ISBN 978-1906506469
» £16.99, paperback

A professor who has dedicated his life to studying butterflies, Philip Howse has introduced ideas about the species that help us to see them in a whole new light. Here he reveals some of his intriguing thoughts on the insects, including insights into their markings, survival strategies and other interesting behaviour. As well as explaining his own fascinating discoveries, Howse gives an overview of commonly seen butterflies such as whites, peacocks and blues. His text is balanced with spectacular colour images, making this a pleasurable read from cover to cover.

THE THRILL OF THE ADVENTURE

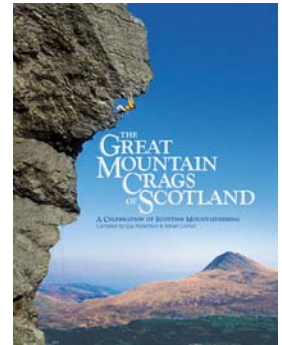
Here's our pick of recently published picture-led adventure books to inspire you to get out there and enjoy the great outdoors...

The Great Mountain Craggs of Scotland: A celebration of Scottish mountaineering

Compiled by Guy Robertson
and Adrian Crofton

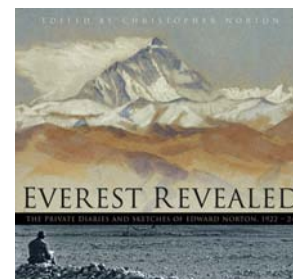
» Vertebrate Publishing
» ISBN 978-1906148898
» £35, hardback

The passion and dedication that has gone into producing this celebration of Scotland's mountains is obvious from the moment you open the book. Drawing together more than 50 leading names from the climbing world, contributors include Andy Cave, Malcolm Bass and Rick Campbell. Boosted by the book's large format, the photos aptly portray the majesty and wonder of some of the oldest mountains on Earth – and those individuals daring enough to climb them. With a poem by Stuart B Campbell opening each of the four chapters, and a collection of thrilling first-hand accounts, it won't take long to feel the desire to experience Scotland's remotest places.



Everest Revealed: The private diaries and sketches of Edward Norton, 1922-24 Edited by Christopher Norton

» The History Press
» ISBN 978-0750955850
» £20, hardback



Without the sophisticated kit available to us today, embarking on demanding expeditions 90 years ago was a feat carried out only by the most intrepid. Published for the first time, the diaries, letters and sketchbooks of Edward Norton (the leader of the 1924 attempt to climb Mount Everest) reveal the daily routine, joys and challenges of

the ascents and the mission as a whole. Norton's charming colour sketches show the wildlife, flowers and people he and his team encountered en route. Compiled by his grandson, Christopher Norton, this is a wonderful tribute to one of the greatest expedition leaders of all time.

Chasing Epic: The snowboard photographs of Jeff Curtes

Jeff Curtes
» American Modern Books
» ISBN 978-1623260286
» £26.99, hardback

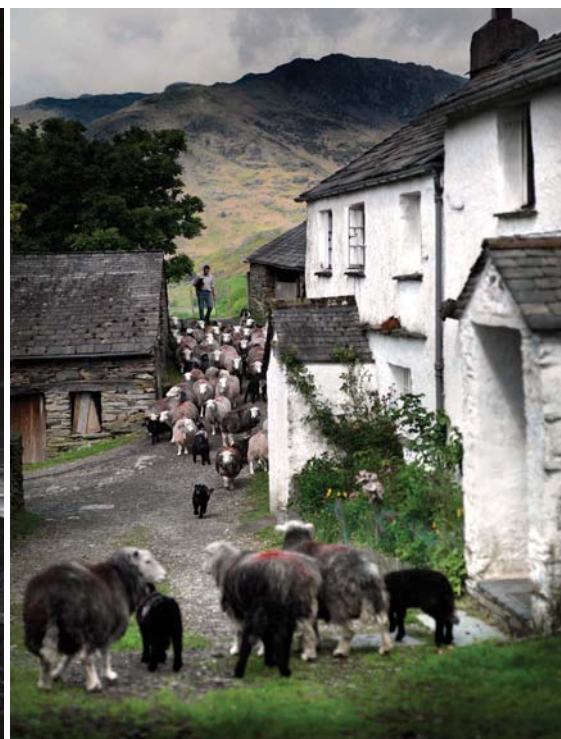
A photographer who lives and breathes his subject, Jeff Curtes has been at the forefront of the snowboarding industry's imagery since his work was first published in 1992. Showcasing his most exhilarating images to date, *Chasing Epic* is as much about the very best snowboarders pushing themselves to the limit as it is about the dramatic landscapes their sport takes them to. The book's large format helps to emphasise the skill and courage the snowboarders possess.



THE BIG VIEW



© Ansel Adams



© Ian Lawson

EXHIBITIONS

1 **Drawn by Light: The Royal Photographic Society Collection**

» Media Space, Science Museum, London

» To 1 March

Bringing together more than 200 photographs from the Royal Photographic Society's prestigious collection, Drawn

By Light is a comprehensive look at the very best imagery produced since the medium's inception to the present day. Drawing upon the 250,000 images owned by the RPS, the exhibition presents landscapes by Ansel Adams, Peter Henry Emerson and Edward Weston, as well as work by Don McCullin,

Steve McCurry and Julia Margaret Cameron, among many others. Adding another interesting dimension to this considered display, key artefacts from photography's history, including Henry Fox Talbot's collection of cameras, are also on show.

sciencemuseum.org.uk

2 **Herdwick: A Portrait of Lakeland**

» Rheged Centre, Cumbria

» To 19 April

An exhibition that looks at the Lake District through the seasons, fell farmers and the native Herdwick sheep, Herdwick: A Portrait of Lakeland is the result of Ian

EXHIBITIONS WITH A DIFFERENCE



© Rob McDougall



© Anthony Robson

Call of the Sea: Delving into the dangers of life at sea

» Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick

» To 27 March

Exploring the history of fishing in North Berwick and the town's harbour area, Call of the Sea features images and intriguing artefacts to highlight the dangerous realities of life at sea. With a strong environmental message throughout, the show explores how maritime industries have evolved as they embrace more sustainable practices. Until 22 February, the Scottish Seabird Centre is also exhibiting the winning images from its annual Nature Photography Awards. seabird.org

Anima and the Wildest Prairies: Charlotte Dumas

» The Photographers Gallery, London

» To 6 April

Alongside her video, *Anima*, which records horses drifting in and out of sleep, Dutch photographer Charlotte Dumas presents her latest series of images, the Wildest Prairies, at the Photographers' Gallery this spring. The photo project began when she started tracking wild horses in Nevada. Often depicting scenes on the fringes of residential areas, Dumas' pictures show where peoples' and animals' paths cross.

thephotographersgallery.org.uk



© Charlotte Dumas

Lawson's five-year fine art photography project. The images will be printed large enough to stretch across the gallery's walls, allowing visitors to get up close to the prints and examine every element of the picture. The exhibition also highlights how Herdwick farming in the area is becoming an endangered way of life due to the pressures of modern farming techniques.
rheged.com

3 **Format15: Evidence**

» *Various locations, Derby*
» *13 March to 12 April*

Now in its 10th year, Format photography festival brings together new photographic work under one particular topic. More than 200 photographers have interpreted this year's theme, 'evidence', and will showcase their images at various locations in Derby. One exhibition of particular interest is Artur Urbanski's series, Live

View, which shows people within landscapes taking photographs of the viewpoint in front of them. Urbanski explores an issue that's becoming more prevalent: if we focus on recording an experience with our cameras and smartphones, how much of it will remain in our memory, and do we engage with the experience on the same level we would without a camera in our hands?
formatfestival.com



© Artur Urbanski

TALKS TO INSPIRE

Sarah Moss: Names for the Sea – Strangers in Iceland

» *18 March*

» *Appleton Tower, University of Edinburgh*
Novelist, travel writer and academic Sarah Moss reads passages from her book about the time she and her family spent living in Iceland's capital, Reykjavik.
rsgs.org



Iain Stewart: Planet Oil – A history of addiction

» *26 February*

» *Victoria Halls, Helensburgh*
TV presenter and Royal Scottish Geographical Society President Iain Stewart explores the past, present and future story of our reliance on petroleum and asks if we really are coming to the end of the hydrocarbon age.
rsgs.org

© University of Plymouth

Development Progress: Through the people's lens

» *26 February*

» *Royal Geographical Society, London*

The Overseas Development Institution and PhotoVoice host a lively discussion on advancements in technology and how this has affected journalists, photographers, filmmakers and charities who tell the stories of those living in developing countries.
rsgs.org



Martyn Farr: Into the Pupu

» *4 March*

» *Chemistry Theatre, Bristol*

World-renowned caver and cave diver Martin Farr talks about his dangerous exploits into three of the largely unexplored Spittal caves in New Zealand, and shares some of his photographs.
wildernesslectures.com

EVENTS TO INSPIRE

WhaleFest 2015

» *Brighton Centre, East Sussex*

» *14 to 15 March*

Aimed at giving whales and dolphins a voice and designed to raise awareness of the plight of cetaceans in captivity, WhaleFest tackles serious issues but with a positive and passionate spirit. Its steady increase in popularity means it gets bigger and better each year. Now in its fourth year, there's an impressive lineup of speakers to entice you, including wildlife cameraman and TV presenter Gordon Buchanan; adventurer, diver and TV presenter Steve Backshall; BBC Ocean Giants producer Mark Brownlow; BBC wildlife filmmaker Steve Greenwood; and marine mammal scientist and wildlife welfare campaigner Dr Naomi Rose.
whale-fest.com

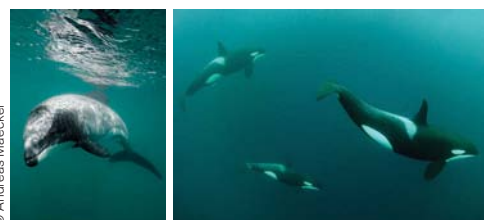


The Photography Show

» *NEC, Birmingham*

» *21 to 24 March*

As well as showcasing the latest camera kit, the Photography Show has a huge range of activities lined up to help visitors learn something new about photography. Highlights include a workshop by travel photographer Roger Reynolds, in which he explains how he overcomes challenging conditions to create high-quality images; wildlife photographer Lou Coetzer reveals the tales behind some of his most beautiful images of the natural world; Nigel Forster offers tips on how to create inspiring landscape imagery; and Danny Green gives a workshop on how to photograph wildlife close-up.
photographyshow.com



© Andreas Maecker



© Nils Aukan

Courtesy of the Photography Show

NOW ON TOUR



© Alex Mustard

Wildlife Photographer Of The Year

» *Natural History Museum at Tring, Hertfordshire*

» *To 8 March*

More than 100 award-winning images from the 2014 Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition are on display in two galleries at the Natural History Museum at Tring. Revealing the beautiful diversity of our natural world, as well as its fragility and the need to preserve it, the images showcase the work of some of today's most exciting wildlife and nature photographers. If you are visiting the museum during the week, please be aware that one of the galleries is also a teaching space in the mornings and may be unavailable for short periods of time.
nhm.ac.uk/tring

above Variable neon slug (*Nembrotha kubaryana*), by Alex Mustard; one of the exhibits at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at Tring.

Your letters

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

A year of inspiration

I wanted to say thank you to all the staff contributors to the magazine and members of the photographic fraternity: I decided to make 2014 the year to start taking my

photography more seriously and I found that setting a goal was a great way to keep myself on track. I called it #Project 32, and it started on 18 January 2014, the day of my 32nd birthday. The idea was to get out and take 32 of my best images to date. Despite enjoying photography before, it had always been as a result of travelling. I now wanted the photography to become the main focus, and actively went to new locations to make the best images I could. Throughout the course of the year I managed to find new locations both locally and further afield. The most satisfying aspect has not even necessarily been the end results, but the feeling of learning and exploring. Receiving *Outdoor Photography* magazine through the door each month has not only inspired me but has also provided invaluable technical advice and location information. Like many, I have a busy professional life, but I would urge any fellow readers to really make the time to get out more; set the alarm that bit earlier, drive that bit further, and you'll be able to enjoy some magical moments in nature. Throughout the year I saw numerous sunrises, sunsets, misty woodland, star-filled skies in mountainous areas and much more. Keep up the good work!

Sam Gregory, via email



above Shelter Rock in the Peak District by Sam Gregory; part of #Project 32. (samgregory-photography.com/project-32)

Back to black & white

A number of years ago, I would go out with just a roll of B&W film in the camera in search of good pictures. It was not until I got in the darkroom that I was able to view my contact sheets to see what images were worth processing and printing on to a sheet of 12x16 glossy paper. Working with B&W film, we were limited to a certain number of exposures, learning B&W skills as we progressed to get stunning images that showed all the tonal qualities of monochrome.

For the past 12 years or so, since going digital, I found the thought of changing the settings on my camera to B&W unimaginable, because I could convert the image in Photoshop. In reality, though, digital has taught us more about colour saturation and HDR, turning our images into vibrant Technicolor files that we can email around the world, without a thought for good old B&W.

So, thank you, *Outdoor Photography*, for taking me back to B&W for the One thing this month – 'Black & white landscapes' competition. It's been a great opportunity to look back at many of my colourful images to see if they work better in monochrome. I have learnt that some images look a lot more dramatic and powerful in B&W, and I believe that from now on, when I go out with my camera, I'll be thinking not only in Technicolor but also in B&W.

Kim Hunt, Dubai

Embrace the lowlands

As an outdoor photographer, I am used to the idea that a landscape can somehow 'speak' to the image-maker. Through it's topography, scale, colours, light, sounds and smells, it communes with our senses, evoking within us a range of emotions and establishing a connection, which photographers often feel deeply. I believe

it is this connection that helps us produce compelling landscape images. The more we immerse ourselves in a landscape, the stronger our connection becomes and the better our images will be.

As a photographer who has spent much of her photographic life on the east coast of England, however, I am also interested in the reasons why some landscapes appear to 'speak' louder than others. Look through any photography magazine, and the pages are filled with hills and mountains, craggy peaks and rocky coastlines. The drama of these regions clearly shouts loudly to many photographers, but where are the flat landscapes; the arable fields, the muddy estuaries, the coastal heathlands and the endless marshes and fens that make up a large part of southern England? These environments may not have the drama of a highland landscape, and as a result may be subtler in their calling, but they are no



March's letter of the month winner, Sam Gregory, receives a Samsung 64GB SDXC PRO Class 10 UHS-1 memory card, worth £72.

Launched in 2014, Samsung's 64GB SDXC PRO memory card has a superfast grade 1 transfer speed of up to 90MB/s. Accelerating workflow and providing ultra-fast performance when transferring high quality images, this impressive card can hold more than 37,000 8MP photos.

Find out more about Samsung's new range of PRO memory cards at samsung.com

less significant – and in my view they can be just as dramatic as any alpine scene.

For such a tiny island we are blessed with an amazing array of landscapes. Our lowland habitats deserve just as much attention as their highland counterparts. Many are just as important from a conservational aspect, and as such they need our attention to ensure they are nurtured and cared for. So let's get out there and embrace the lowlands of England and see more flat landscape photography within the pages of our books and magazines.

Gill Moon, via email

Colour space confusion

I wonder if anyone can resolve my confusion as to the pros and cons of different colour spaces. I export from Lightroom for archiving or printing in Adobe RGB, but for my website I have so far followed the advice generally given to use sRGB. Recently, however, I have noticed that some of my images are less vibrant in sRGB than in Adobe. This has led me to ask why they should be uploaded in sRGB.

My website hosts say the reason sRGB is advised is simply to ensure uniformity of display from one monitor to another; 'typical' monitors having a gamut more closely akin to sRGB. The key question must be whether images can ever look worse on a 'typical' monitor if uploaded in Adobe rather than sRGB, despite looking as good or even better on higher grade monitors.

Photography expert Tim Grey suggests that this may be so, due to a risk of banding when an image in Adobe RGB is displayed on a device with a more limited gamut. As I use a monitor with a wider gamut, I don't often see how my images look on others, so I have no idea how serious this risk might be and whether it depends on file size – I export from Lightroom at 160KB maximum. If it isn't serious, I would rather use Adobe to maximise vibrancy on monitors that allow this.

Ian McColl, Liverpool

Litter in the landscape

I've been taking photographs, mainly landscapes, for more than 30 years. I recently spent two days around Glen Coe, one of the iconic settings for landscape photography. The weather was playing ball and I had a fantastic time photographing Buachaille Etive Mòr, Rannoch Moor, Glen Etive and other wonderful scenes. One constant bugbear,

however, was the amount of litter present at each location. I was appalled at the amount of rubbish people had simply dumped, presumably from their vehicles. Much of the rubbish consisted of discarded fast food wrappers and a huge number of empty drinks cans. While the fast food outlets are often painted as the villains, it is the consumer who is responsible for disposing of their rubbish. What shocked me most was those people who had taken the time to bag up all their rubbish and then discarded the whole bag rather than find a litter bin. Many outdoor photographers are, like myself, keen environmentalists, so rather than clone out or move the offending litter from view, bag it up and dispose of it properly. People are less likely to drop litter in uncluttered areas. So, if we all do our bit, we can help keep our landscapes clean for everyone's enjoyment.

Phillip Clegg, via email

A deceptive moment?

I was enjoying seeing photos from the Landscape Photographer of the Year 2014 competition in your magazine (OP187), and in particular an outstanding image entitled 'Bright eyes', of the sun rising over Mam Tor in Derbyshire. A well composed and beautifully lit shot was turned in to something special by a rabbit appearing in the scene briefly, and the photographer was quick enough to grab the perfect shot.

I then saw another image on the opposing page. It wasn't quite as interesting to me, but I was taken by this action shot, which appeared to also catch a moment – what Henri Cartier-Bresson once called the 'decisive moment'. I then felt cheated to see that it was a digitally manipulated image in which the man and one of the dogs had been added in post-processing. It was no longer of much interest to me. What really angered me, however, was that it made me question the integrity of the preceding image of Mam Tor, and whether I could believe that the rabbit had suddenly appeared.

below A spread from our Landscape Photographer of the Year showcase, in the January 2015 issue of OP, which included commended photographer Peter Warrington's digitally manipulated image.

This is precisely why competitions such as Landscape Photographer of the Year need stronger rules on digital manipulation.

Mark Murton, Wallington

Editor's response Hi Mark, the image of the red setters on the beach, by Peter Warrington, was entered into the Your View category of Landscape Photographer of the Year, which allows digital manipulation. The 'Bright eyes' image, by Dave Fieldhouse, on the other hand, was entered into the Classic View category of the competition, which allows minor digital adjustments only. Photographers shortlisted in LPOTY must submit their original Raw files, which are thoroughly inspected to ensure they adhere to the competition's guidelines; so you can rest assured that Dave Fieldhouse captured a genuine moment.

The secret of a good photo

I look forward every month to receiving my copy of *Outdoor Photography*, and read it from cover to cover with great enjoyment. Steve Watkins' Editor's Letter in the January issue (OP187) really struck me. For some time I've been trying to define what makes a good image. Steve hits the nail on the head by stating 'It's all about you' – the photographer.

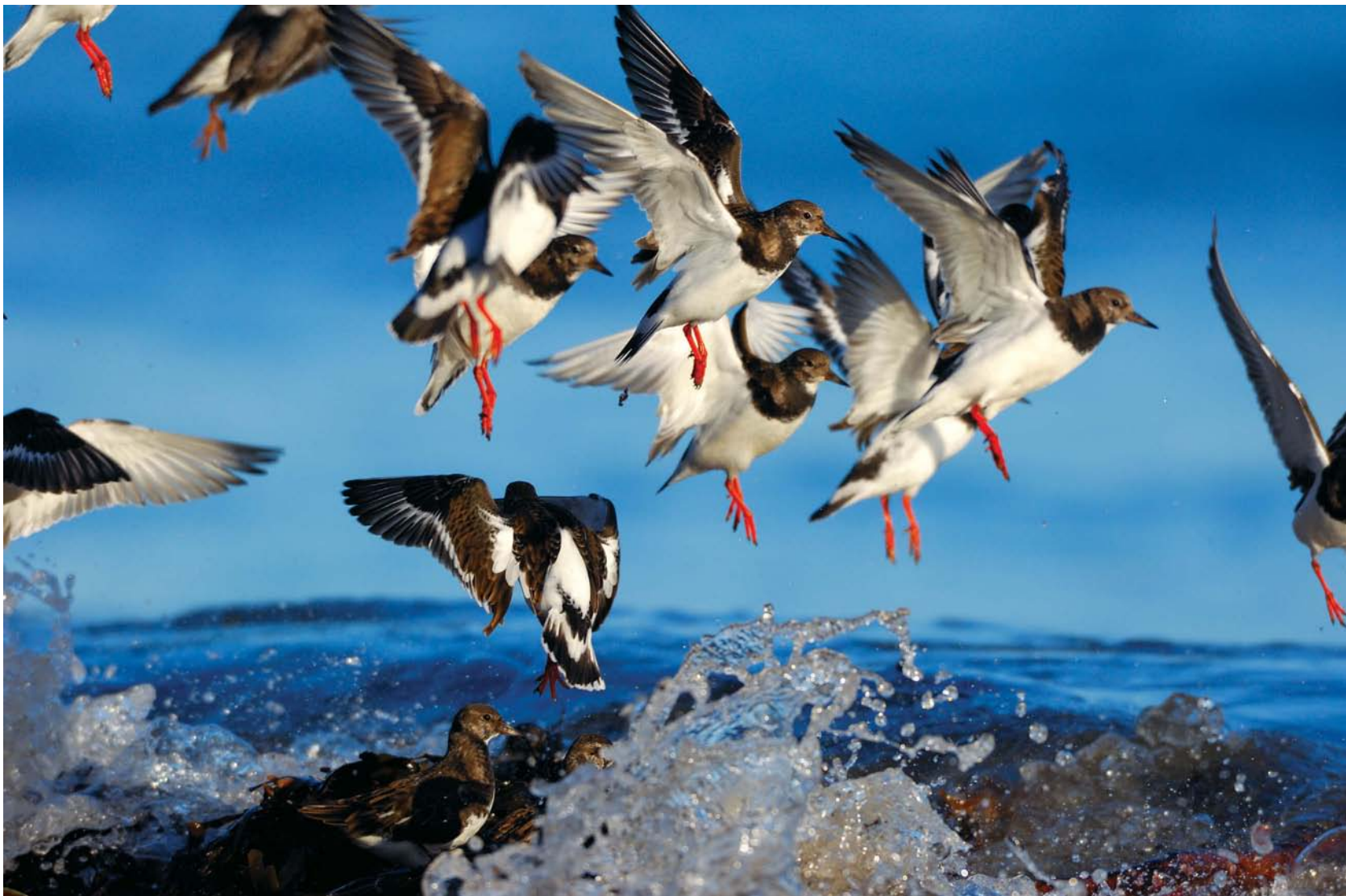
As I see it, a good photograph is one that does what the photographer sets out to achieve, whether that be a record of a child's first step or capturing a stunning landscape. This requires the discipline of thinking through the objective before pressing the shutter button. It is only then that the photographer can review the image and assess the quality of his or her efforts. The beauty of this approach is that it applies equally to the acknowledged expert or absolute beginner; and what better way can there be of finding shortcomings and raising one's standards as we gain experience? By all means, heed the comments of others and read up on technical issues, but in the end it is up to you, the photographer, to decide how the result matched your objective.

Oscar Wilde once said 'art begins where imitation ends'. Photography is an art form and, like all types of art, it requires technical skill. Pouring over the locations and nature guides in *OP*, and seeing inspirational images in the magazine or in an exhibition can point one in the right direction, but nothing beats looking at an image either on screen or in print and thinking 'that's exactly what I set out to achieve; now how can I raise the bar that bit higher next time'.

Keith Collie, Wexford, Ireland







IN CONVERSATION WITH Laurie Campbell

Outdoor Photography columnist Laurie Campbell recently received the RSPB's Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to nature photography. Niall Benvie, who first met him in 1988, knows better than most how deep that contribution runs...

Imagine, if you will, the days before the internet, when books were the best way to see what other photographers were doing. I'd been taking photographs since the early 1980s, publishing some, and thinking I was doing quite well alongside others I saw in print. Then, in 1988, I bought *The Wildlife Photographs of Laurie Campbell* and everything changed. The photographs were like nothing I'd ever seen before: pictures shot on overcast or wet days in natural light, often from a very low angle that rendered foreground and background as a blur – and of the same species I had access to in Scotland, but had never managed to photograph. What struck me most was the sense of authenticity and of feeling like I was at the photographer's shoulder. These images had a spirit absent in the studio-perfect wildlife shots so common in those days.

Not long after, I was giving a talk on the outskirts of Edinburgh, near where Laurie and his wife Margaret lived, and was invited to stay with them. That evening Laurie pulled out sheet after sheet of slides of recent work for a book on pinewoods and laid them quietly on the light table as I looked on in wonder. Far from feeling humiliated, it was like a door had been flung open into a world I hadn't realised existed and that was hugely exciting.

Laurie's way of doing things, by his own admission, is more River Cottage than Gordon Ramsay – for his whole career he has focused his efforts on producing the best work he can and letting it do the talking, allowing his business to grow organically. 'My grandfather used to say that a small fire will keep you warm but a big one can burn you,' he recalls.

above Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), Northumberland coast, England.

left St Abbs Head, Berwickshire, Scottish Borders.

>



This is one of the reasons his work, and his life, is intensely focused on Scotland, especially his home ground around Berwick-upon-Tweed. This attachment stretches back to childhood when he was given the freedom to spend time out in the woods and on the river bank, building dens and watching wildlife. But this went beyond normal childhood curiosity about nature; there was a deep yearning to learn about the natural world that kept him out longer than others, and brought with it the authority of first-hand knowledge.

So it was, at the age of 13 he was granted a day off school to lobby, along with another Berwick naturalist, for an underpass for badgers on the new Berwick-upon-Tweed A1 bypass that they knew would cross the animals' foraging route. This unlikely pair – a teenage boy and an 80-year-old man – knew what they were talking about: the road builders relented and put in the tunnel.

With the support of his family, especially a great aunt in Edinburgh, Laurie came to photography as a way to share his experiences. The limitations of the Instamatic were soon apparent, but the seeds had been sown and by the time he took a job as a keeper at Edinburgh Zoo a few years later he was selling black & white pictures of animals – at 10 pence for a 10x8in print.

Laurie was encouraged to study photography at Napier University, at a time when there was no recognition of the discipline of nature photography. Nevertheless, natural subjects became the theme of his projects, and he even managed to shoot a great spotted woodpecker at bait with a 5x4 monorail Sinar.

Around the same time, Laurie became aware of the work of Hannu Hautala, Ingmar Holmasen and other European photographers whose styles encouraged him towards a more

interpretative approach. But the big breakthrough had still to come. *Wildlife Photography: The Art and Technique of Ten Masters* showed the results that some American photographers were getting with long, extra low dispersion lenses. 'So when it came to a choice between a deposit for a flat and a secondhand Nikkor 600mm f/5.6 lens, I bought the lens,' he smiles.

This lens helped to define Laurie's signature style – very low-angle, with soft foreground. 'I didn't set out to create a particular look. It came about through the need to keep a low profile when stalking, and resting the lens on a beanbag. Few tripods were up to keeping completely still when using the exceptionally long shutter speeds needed to expose Kodachrome 64 slide film in bad weather. I'd often shoot through vegetation, too, and as I grew to like the look of these pictures, I deliberately set out to shoot from a low angle.

The publication of the *RSPB Guide to Bird and Nature Photography* in 1990, which sold in excess of 30,000 copies in several languages, brought Laurie's work to a wider audience at home and abroad. His growing reputation and strong stock sales might have tempted him to work abroad where certain in-demand subjects are much easier to photograph. Indeed, in 1994 he was commissioned by National Geographic Television to work in Chile with film cameraman Hugh Miles to produce stills to support his film about a wild puma living in Torres del Paine. 'If anything, that trip confirmed in my mind that I wouldn't do any more overseas work,' he explains. 'It was very successful but that was mainly because there were a lot of resources and support behind the film and a lot of the groundwork had been done already. It was an exceptional opportunity.' So, Laurie came

above Silhouette of swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) hawking for insects, Berwickshire, Scottish Borders.

top right Red campion (*Silene dioica*) in deciduous woodland, Berwickshire, Scottish Borders.

bottom right Chilean sorrel (*Oxalis squamoso-radicata*) seedling plant emerging in spring, Torres del Paine National Park, Chile.







home and renewed his commitment to working in Scotland. And, when the opportunity came to move to the Highlands 18 years ago, he and Margaret deliberated long and hard before deciding to move instead to a bigger house in Berwick-upon-Tweed, the same area he'd known since he was a boy.

It would be easy to mistake this attachment to place for a lack of adventure. But, to the contrary, Laurie delves deep into the 'inner country' – the world of the animals and plants he lives with and photographs – a journey that needs a huge investment of time, as well as faith that the things you know happen will, sooner or later, be brought out into the world as a photograph. Just as a robin must know its territory intimately so it can find insects even in the depths of winter, so must the photographer who wants to produce fresh work.

'Some of the projects I work on now, like photographing bats as they fly by, are so difficult and time consuming I wouldn't travel even five miles to pursue them,' he says. 'But they can provide pictures that have never been seen before.'

Staying in one place also allows the photographer to witness change and be open to new opportunities. While some species from his youth, such as the great crested newt and the water vole, have disappeared, others have either returned or appeared, such as otters and banded demoiselle damselflies. He is confident that sea eagles will nest again one day on the Berwickshire coast as they did in the 19th century.

Laurie has been fascinated by otters since seeing his first one as a teenager in Loch Sunart. But when he realised that they were returning to the Tweed, on his own doorstep, the idea for an ambitious project about freshwater otters took shape in his mind. Now, after thousands of hours, that work has appeared in

his new book, *Otters Return to the River*, written with Anna Levin. It's the most comprehensive photographic account of freshwater otters in the UK and, as Laurie says, it is '...the book I always wanted to publish.'

The photography business has changed enormously since Laurie set forth in his Morris Minor with a Woolworths tent in the 1980s and, like many, he has responded by teaching more workshops. 'I love the whole outdoor education ethos of the Aigas Field Centre, where I work with John Lister-Kaye,' he says. In a crowded workshop marketplace, Laurie offers something special: long photographic experience and exceptional fieldcraft. He also has the capacity, as I found all those years ago, to introduce a realisation of the opportunities that exist if we just slow down and really look deeply into things. 'I think one of the biggest compliments I've had was when a woman called me to ask, "What have you done to my husband? We stopped for two hours on the way home so he could photograph grass in the rain!"'

Laurie is excited by the opportunities new technology, such as his CamRanger, open up but also by the discoveries he continues to make near to home. 'I've found a stretch of stream near a local badgers' sett where at the right time of year salmon kelts swim,' he says. 'And the badgers are eating them...'

Laurie's Lifetime Achievement Award from the RSPB in 2014, as well as his inclusion in the Highland Naturalists Exhibition (30 of the most important Scottish naturalists from the last 300 years) at Scottish Natural Heritage's Great Glen House, are evidence of recognition by the wider outdoor community, and ones that give Laurie particular satisfaction. I have a feeling, though, that the award is a bit premature and that Laurie has many more surprises from the inner country to share with us. ■

above Adult badger (*Meles meles*), Berwickshire, Scottish Borders.

top left White water lily leaf (*Nymphaea alba*), Inverness-shire, Scotland.

bottom left Otter (*Lutra lutra*) feeding on an eel in the river Tweed, Berwickshire, Scottish Borders.



Photographer and climber Greg Annandale shares the story behind an image he took during an expedition to one of the world's most spectacular, yet seldom visited, mountain ranges

Back in August 2012 I was part of a team of four on an exploratory expedition to the Altai mountains in southern Siberia, where the borders of China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia meet. The region is rarely visited by westerners, and our goal was to put up some British first ascents and report back on the area to facilitate future trips.

Our fixer, Igor, had arranged transport from Barnaul airport to Kurai (12 hours in a big yellow van), followed by a 4x4 the next day for the trip up to basecamp. Due to recent local flooding, the rivers were far more swollen than expected and we were forced to stop 10km shy of our proposed camp. With around 50kg of food, fuel and equipment each to carry, we lost a day from our schedule simply trying to get to our

preferred basecamp site – a long slog up the steep valley sides, avoiding the bogs in the lower regions. Once there, however, we found ourselves in a magnificent amphitheatre of rocky slopes and ridges, complete with a chilly lake for bathing.

We had nine days available to explore as much of our end of the South Chuyski Range as we could. Climbing in pairs, we undertook a series of attempts on the different peaks, starting either from basecamp or from a bivouac site, depending on the route.

This particular shot was taken during a brief spell of relative downtime. We had returned from an ascent of the large snow dome in the background (Dzhaniktu, 3,942m) and decided to spend the day 'relaxing' by climbing some

of the lower crags in the valley. We headed into a small gorge above our basecamp (to the left of the lake), and I set up on the far side in order to shoot the climbers at a similar height and from a side-lit position. A wideangle was the obvious choice, as it allowed me to capture some action together with the incredible surrounding scenery.

Shooting in areas with no electricity and where we are completely self-sufficient is always a challenge. On top of the large number of spare batteries, a particular concern in mountainous regions is the storage and backing up of media (traditional hard drives don't perform well in the thin air at altitude). On this trip I was able to test SSD-based backup storage, which was a huge success (both in performance at altitude and reliability in rough conditions). ■

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THE ART OF ADVENTURE

Alex Buisse reveals how to capture compelling outdoor sport images

How to shoot amazing adventure images

Leading adventure photographer and alpinist Alex Buisse shows you how to capture powerful action images in extreme environments, without ever missing a shot

Even if I never picked up a camera again, I would still be going out into the mountains, experiencing the wilderness and having adventures. But being able to capture some of these amazing experiences and sharing them with the world through photography makes them even more meaningful.

Adventure photography, however, is not without its challenges. Wilderness can be very hostile to our bodies, not to mention our equipment, and great effort must often be made just to get to a location – before we have even taken the lens cap off! Yet for all this, or perhaps because of it, it must be one of the most exciting and beautiful kinds of photography.





HAVE AN ADVENTURE

The hardest part of adventure photography is often not the capture itself but the challenge of simply getting into a position where we can see the action unfolding. It actually goes even deeper: if the photographer is an active participant rather than a detached observer (perhaps shooting from a helicopter or from the beach shore), he or she will experience the action very differently, and will have many more opportunities to create meaningful, authentic images.

Of course, this means a lot of extra work. Not only do you need to master the photography side of things, but you should also have basic proficiency in whatever sport you are shooting. You also need to add the constraints of being in the wilderness and taking pictures in extreme environments. But then again, if it were easy everybody would be doing it!

You don't necessarily have to be able to perform at the same level as the athlete you are shooting, thankfully. Otherwise, who could ever photograph top athletes? There is almost always an easier way to access the best viewpoints: a boat can drop you off, you can climb an easier route up a mountain, ski around that big cliff or even fly tandem with a powered paraglider. But the key is knowing the activity really well so you can predict where the best viewpoint will be, and when the action is most likely to be at its peak.

Finally, being an active participant in the adventure also means you will be able to capture unstaged moments you weren't planning on. These can often prove to be the most powerful images from a shoot.



Carrying systems

The best way to bring back almost nothing from an adventure is to have the camera in a hard-to-reach place. At all costs, avoid putting it in your backpack, as you'll rarely bother to take it out. I personally use modular waist packs (the lightweight ThinkTank Skin) together with the tiny Peak Design Capture Camera Clip, attached either to my climbing harness or on a backpack strap.

above (top) I took off with a parachute myself after taking this shot; the logistics of coming back down alone on foot were too daunting!
Nikon D800 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 16mm,
ISO 400, 1/4000sec at f/5.6

above If pro cyclist Tito Tomasi can carry a 20kg bike up a snowy mountain, you can definitely carry your DSLR!
Nikon D4 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 16mm,
ISO 1600, 1/60sec at f/8



LIGHTING AND BACKGROUND

When was the last time you read a photography article that didn't advise you to shoot at sunrise or sunset? It should hardly come as a surprise, then, that the golden hour is a great time to shoot adventure images.

The golden hour is not the only source of great light, however. Cloud cover can be a blessing in disguise, adding subtle contrast. For fast-moving sports, like skiing or mountain biking, timing your photo so that the athlete is just hitting a patch of light can create beautifully atmospheric images. Lightly overcast weather can also work very well, diffusing sunlight and effectively creating a huge soft box.

Getting the right background in your shot is equally important. After all, the whole point of having an adventure is often to explore wild and unusual places, and it would be a shame not to showcase them as well as the action itself. Keep an eye out for potential backgrounds and design your image back from there. Decide which feature or landscape you want behind the subject, where you want the athlete to be and what they should be doing. Finally, work out where you need to stand to make it happen.

There are two main ways to achieve the sort of composition you are looking for: either shoot very wide and very close to the action to create lots of depth, or shoot from far away to compress the layers and make the athlete a full part of the landscape.



Shoot into the sun

One thing we cannot fully control is the light, and sometimes the sun is simply too bright and high in the sky. A good tip for these situations is to forget everything you've ever learned and shoot straight into the sun, getting the subject lightly underexposed (no matter what you do, the sun will be blown out). You can then recover a lot of detail in post-production and create a very dynamic image, especially if you used an ultra-wide lens.

CAPTURE THE RIGHT MOMENT

A lot of adventure photography is action based, and capturing that split-second moment is key to creating a strong image.

The sports we shoot can occur at various speeds. Timing will certainly be more critical when shooting base jumping (blink and the jumper is gone from view) than for sea kayaking, for example. But even photos of a comparatively slow hiker will benefit from perfect timing; walking is actually a very complex movement, and it will suggest movement more clearly at certain moments – usually when the walker's legs are apart and the centre of gravity is moving from back to front.

Getting the timing right is an area where your camera equipment will make a real difference. Shooting with a top-end DSLR capable of 11fps will

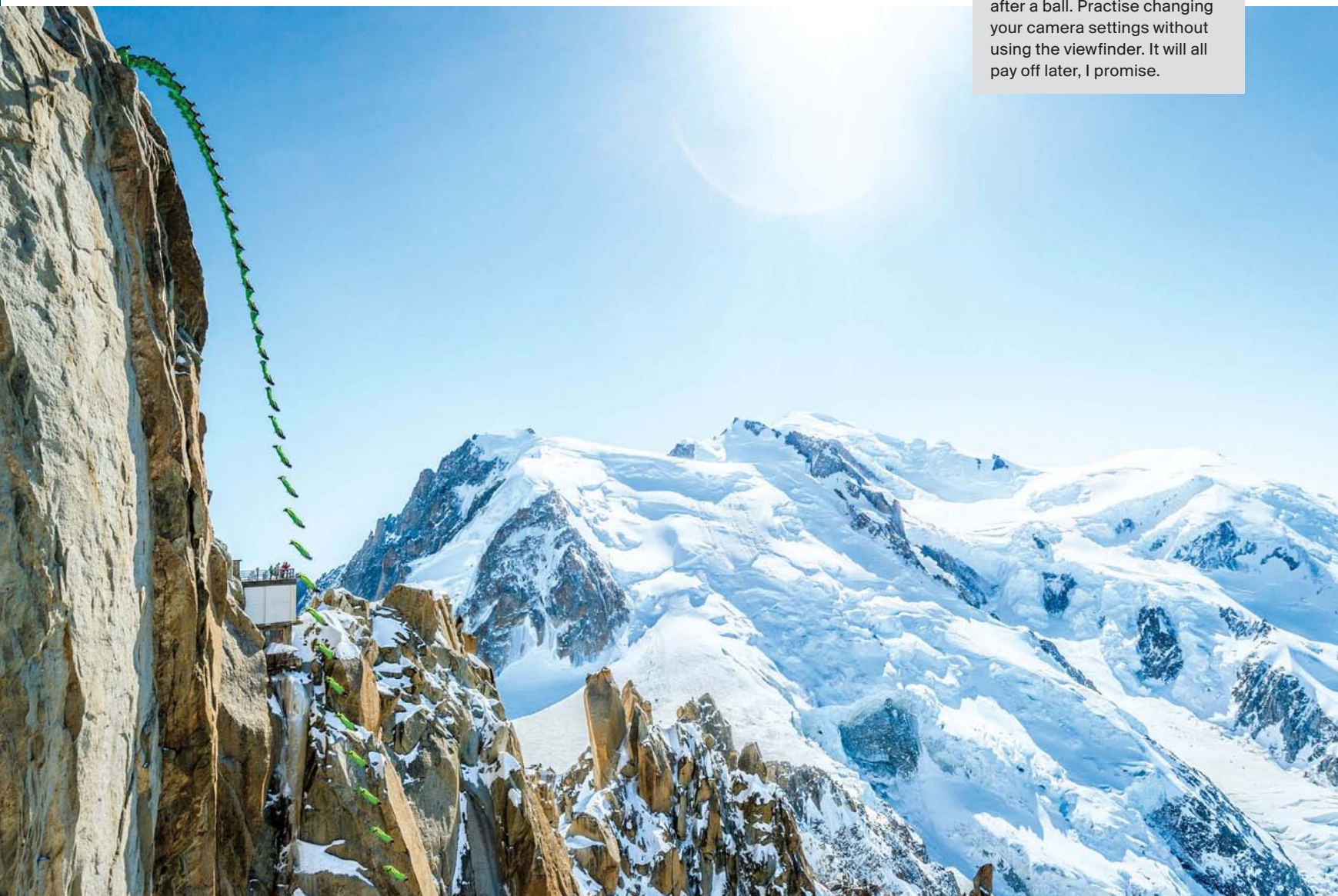
yield more opportunities to perfectly capture a moment. But it is even more important to have a large buffer and very fast cards. Nothing is more frustrating than seeing the perfect image unfold in front of your eyes while your index finger desperately presses that trigger button to no effect, as the camera is too busy emptying its buffer.

That being said, don't make the mistake of thinking you always need high-speed cameras to capture the action. If you know your sport well, you can anticipate the best moment and get that perfect single frame on your first attempt; all you need is some training, and decent reflexes. This is something I try to achieve when using big flashes, as their recycle times are way too slow to capture fast sequences.

Practice makes perfect

Knowing your camera well is crucial for adventure photography. You may be cold, scared and exhausted up on a mountain, but when the action unfolds you need to be ready to react. Miss your focus or get a full buffer, and the moment is gone.

Take the time to practise at home. Photograph a friend running in a park and observe their movement; decide which part of their motion looks good in an image. Study your camera manual then go out and apply everything you've learned while tracking birds in flight or while photographing a dog running after a ball. Practise changing your camera settings without using the viewfinder. It will all pay off later, I promise.



above Sometimes you really need 11fps.
*Nikon D4 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 20mm,
ISO 400, 1/2000sec at f/8; 46 images stitched*

opposite page (top) Light effects on ice can be absolutely gorgeous.
*Nikon D4 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 16mm,
ISO 800, 1/60sec at f/4*

opposite page (bottom) Shooting straight into the sun resulted in a strong image.
*Nikon D4 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 19mm,
ISO 400, 1/4000sec at f/8*



BUILD A STORY

Ultimately, photography is all about getting an emotional reaction from the viewer. And photography, unlike video, usually only gets a single static frame to do so. We can't afford to be fully explicit, and instead have to remain suggestive, leaving hints all over the image as to what is going on. This means that every time somebody views an image they have to build their own story of the events that have been captured. Our job is to lead them to create the story we want to tell.

As photographers, we have a number of tools at our disposal. The first, of course, is composition. By using lead-in lines and careful framing we can direct the eye towards the main subject, and potentially create movement and dynamism. The simpler the composition, the clearer our story.

Another key tool is light. Our eyes are naturally attracted to bright zones, and are drawn away from dark areas in an image. We can use a slight vignette to keep the eye locked on to the centre of the image, for example, and position our subject strategically to draw the viewer's eye.

The subject's pose and facial expressions are also very important; eyes are especially powerful.

Tell your story aloud

Try to vocalise exactly what the story is. If you can't instantly come up with something more significant about the scene than 'it's pretty', then it probably won't be a great shot. If, on the other hand, you can say something like 'it's a small, lonely figure exploring a wild, untouched landscape' or 'it's an exhausted trekker expressing his joy at reaching camp after a long day out', then you are on to something. This is an exercise I have found invaluable whenever I am considering taking a shot or making my selection during the editing process.



STEPS TO SUCCESS

1 Know the sport you are shooting. Even better, be a full participant.

2 Keep your camera in an easy to reach place at all times and don't be afraid to shoot a lot; most situations will never occur again.

3 Don't stop shooting because the going gets hard, or you'll miss the peak of the action.

4 Don't spend time messing around with gear. One camera and one lens (two at most) is often enough.

CAPTURE THE HIGHS AND LOWS

It would be a mistake to think it's only worth shooting at the height of the action; the hero shots with perfect light and gorgeous backgrounds. Sure, they are the images most likely to end up on the cover of a magazine, but they are not necessarily telling the whole story. What about all the moments of doubt, of suffering? What about the climber who has failed to do that move five times in a row? What about the spectacular crashes? And then there are the other aspects of the adventure, such as the journey to the location, resting around a campfire and getting ready for a night in a tent.

All these moments and many more are well worth exploring. They make for subtler images, but they have the power to create a connection with the athletes that hero shots won't necessarily allow.

This is when being a full participant is really worthwhile. By sharing the challenges, your subjects will come to trust you and ultimately allow you to photograph them while they are at their most vulnerable. A portrait of an exhausted trekker or a close-up of shredded hands often tells a more powerful story than yet another image of the hardest move on a climbing route.



top To capture this adventure racing team at such a vulnerable moment, I shared their hardships for more than two days in the Patagonian wilderness. *Nikon D700 with 70-200mm f/2.8 at 150mm, ISO 640, 1/1000sec at f/2.8*

above (left) Portrait of ice climber Mathis Dumas, Mer de Glace, France. *Nikon D4 with 16-35mm f/4 lens at 20mm, ISO 800, 1/60sec at f/16*



above (right) Tony Hoare skis in last light during a late evening climb of Birdbone Peak in Greenland, above base camp. *Nikon D4 with 70-200mm f/2.8 lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/1000sec at f/2.8*

TAKE PART! Enter our 'adventure photography' competition
– turn to page 111 for details

PROTECTING YOUR GEAR

The second most common reason photographers come back empty-handed from their adventures is that they are scared of damaging their gear (reason number one is that the camera stayed in their backpack the whole time). While some damage is pretty much inevitable if you are taking your camera into the mountains day after day, you'd be surprised at how much you can throw at even entry-level cameras before they completely give up. Here are a few tips on how to protect your kit in the wilderness:

1/ The number one killer is humidity and condensation. The only time I will really stop shooting is in heavy rain, but fog and drizzle can also be dangerous to the electronics. Snow, on the other hand, is completely fine.

2/ Dropping a camera is a definite possibility. Having lost a Nikon D700 and a 70-200mm lens, I now attach a simple safety leash to my strap and climbing harness or backpack. You can make one with two small carabiners and a piece of cord, or get the smart Peak Design Leash system (which doubles as a camera strap).

3/ Lens front elements do get scratched. I use clear UV filters and lens hoods. On the other hand, I never bother with lens caps, as they always end up at the bottom of a mountain.

4/ Very low temperatures are never an issue, as long as I have a few spare batteries I can keep warm (usually in an inside pocket, close to my body). Temperatures will need to drop to at least -30°C before shutters begin to freeze and electronics fail. By then, you'll probably have other things to worry about.

5/ Going from cold to warm and humid (typically entering a heated building) too quickly will create condensation, which can be nasty. Make sure you warm the camera slowly; consider putting it in a sealed plastic bag. Also, try not to go back out into the cold while condensation is still present, or it can freeze.

6/ If you're shooting in humid environments, especially close to the sea, watch out for corrosion. Store your equipment in sealed bags with silicate gel packets. If you happen to drop your camera in saltwater, rinse it liberally with clear water and let it dry, with the card and battery removed, for a few days. They usually survive.

5 Find ways to include beautiful landscapes in your shots and hunt for the best natural light you can find. Consider using flash.

6 Be fit. You need to be able to keep up with your subject so you can spend extra time and effort on getting the shots.

7 Build trust with your subject; both as a photographer and as a teammate.

8 Put safety first, always. Be ready to say no, and make sure your subject doesn't do anything silly just because there's a camera.

QUICK GUIDE TO...

Shooting the aurora borealis

The season for seeing and capturing the northern lights is upon us. **Lee Frost** tells you all you need to know to take amazing photographs of this elusive phenomenon



I'll never forget the first time I witnessed the aurora borealis with my own eyes. It was back in January 2014 and I was standing on the shore of Iceland's much-photographed glacial lagoon, Jökulsárlón. The night sky was relatively clear and the aurora forecast was for mild activity, so my companions and I decided to chance it. Within minutes of arriving, flashes of faint green and purple started to dance across the night sky, gradually building in intensity. I opened my camera's shutter and made an exposure of several seconds. When the shutter closed and the preview image appeared I was gobsmacked! Finally, there it was. I'll admit that, compared to some of the images I've seen of the aurora, mine was pretty average. But considering it was my first attempt at both seeing and shooting this amazing spectacle, I was chuffed to bits. I'd also learned that capturing the aurora is pretty easy if you follow a few simple guidelines.

WHAT CAUSES THE AURORA BOREALIS?

The aurora is the result of electrically charged particles from the sun colliding with gaseous particles in Earth's atmosphere. Green is the colour most commonly seen, and is created by oxygen molecules roughly 60 miles above Earth. Collisions between molecules above the surface of the sun occur all the time, due to extremely high temperatures (millions of degrees Celsius). Free protons and electrons then escape through holes in the magnetic field around the sun and head towards Earth. Most of them are deflected by Earth's magnetic field, but some get through at the poles, where the magnetic field is weaker, and collide with gaseous particles to create the aurora. The more particles there are, the stronger the aurora can be. A weak display will appear as a faint green curtain whereas a strong display produces bright bands and swirls of vibrant colour that flash and dance across the night sky.

FIVE ESSENTIAL TIPS

Follow these steps and great aurora images are almost guaranteed...

1

Check the local weather forecast as well as the aurora forecast (see box below) for the night ahead. If dense cloud is forecast, you're not going to see any activity, but on a clear night, even a fairly weak aurora forecast can produce great shots. Head out around 9pm and be prepared to stay put until 2am or later.

2

Mount your camera on a tripod, attach a cable release and fit your widest lens – focal lengths of 14-24mm for full-frame and 10-15mm for crop sensors are ideal. Fast prime lenses are the best choice as they allow you to keep exposures short. I use 14mm f/2.8 and 21mm f/2.8 lenses – but you can also use a f/3.5-4 zoom.

3

Set your lens to its widest aperture and the ISO to 1600. Use manual focus, as autofocus won't work due to the low light. Simply focusing on infinity may not work, as you're shooting at maximum aperture, so do some test shots – you may need to focus just before infinity to get infinity sharp, especially with zooms.

4

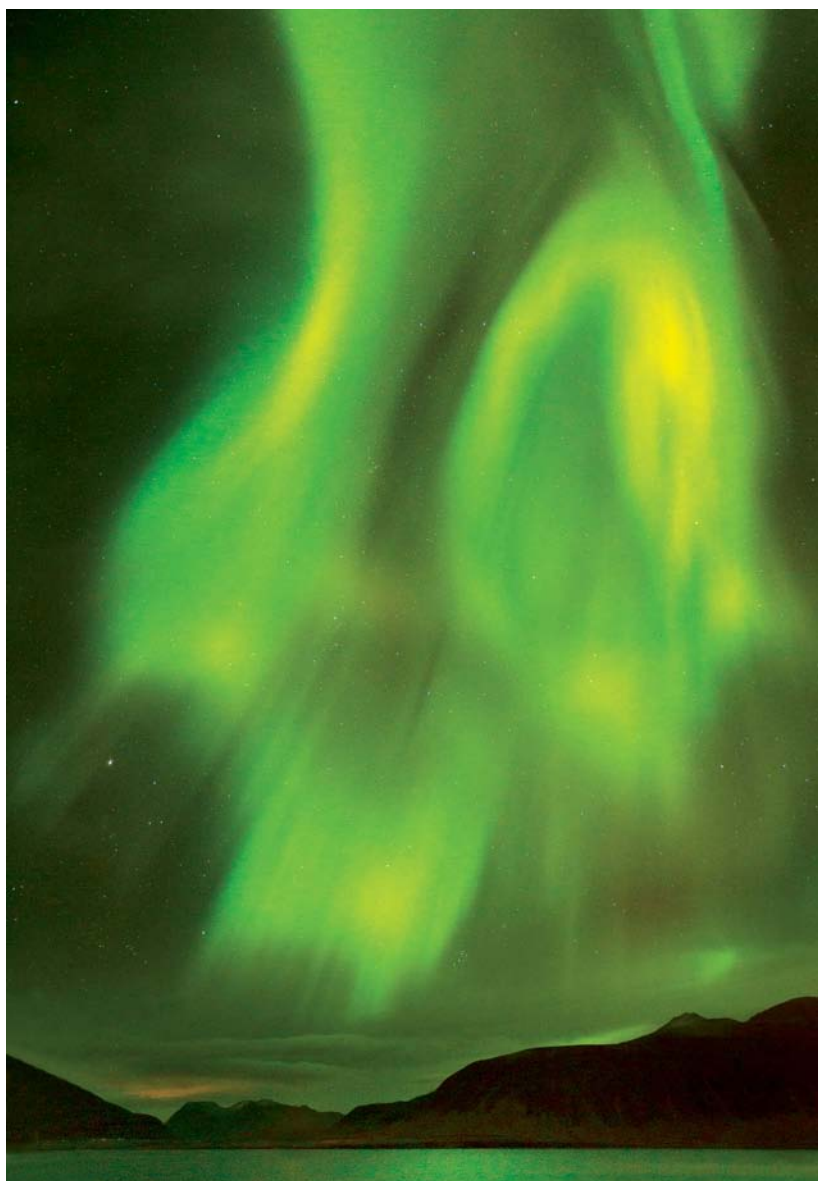
Ideally you need to keep the exposure shorter than 30 seconds so the aurora doesn't blur – 10 seconds or less is ideal. If you have a lens with a maximum aperture of f/2.8 or wider you should be able to manage that at ISO 1600. With a f/4 zoom you'll struggle and may need to set the ISO to 3200.

5

When the aurora is active, keep shooting, as you never know how long it will last. As the aurora gets brighter, exposures get shorter. During post-production you shouldn't need to do much – adjust Levels or Curves to boost contrast, maybe increase Vibrance a little. I also shoot in Raw and use AWB (auto white balance).

left Jökulsárlón, Iceland
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm lens,
ISO 1600, 10sec at f/4, tripod

below Grundarfjörður, Iceland
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 21mm lens,
ISO 1600, 5sec at f/2.8, tripod



WHERE AND WHEN TO SEE THE AURORA BOREALIS

- » In Europe, the further north you go towards the Arctic Circle, the more chance you have of seeing amazing aurora displays. Iceland is a popular destination, but northern Scandinavia (Lapland) is also worth considering. There are lots of tour operators offering aurora trips through the winter.
- » In the UK, the aurora is often seen in Northumberland (Kielder Forest has the darkest skies in England) and throughout Scotland. The further north you go, the better – try going to Orkney or Shetland, for example.
- » The aurora occurs in the northern sky, above the magnetic pole, so you need to find a location where you're facing north. The aurora also occurs in the southern hemisphere, where it's known as the aurora australis, and is found in the southern sky.
- » Find locations where you can include hills, mountains, trees or anything that will add scale and interest to your compositions.
- » You need to be away from light pollution, so avoid towns and cities and head as far out into the countryside as you can.
- » The aurora is most likely to be seen between late September and early April and between 10pm and 2am. Avoid dates around the full moon, as it can cause light pollution.

For more information on the aurora and to check for activity, visit these websites:

- » Icelandic Meteorological Office en.vedur.is
- » Space Weather Prediction Centre swpc.noaa.gov
- » Aurora Service Europe aurora-service.eu/aurora-forecast
- » AuroraWatch UK aurorawatch.lancs.ac.uk



Exploring the power of careful framing and visually stimulating subject matter, Pete Bridgwood creates an engaging image that invites the viewer into the scene

Much has been written about how the photographic process differs from that of easel painting; both culminate in the creation of a still image but start with entirely different frames of reference. Traditional artists start with 'nothing' – a blank canvas – and slowly build their image by the addition of paint. Conversely, photographers start with 'everything' – the whole scene – and composition is created by careful selection of viewpoint and framing. Viewpoint is the critical determinant of juxtaposition, perspective and the relative presence of foreground, middle-ground and background elements which emphasise compression or depth. Once we have chosen our viewpoint, the framing process comprises the selection of an appropriate focal length lens and the direction in which we point it. Framing allows the moulding of our composition and establishment of visual balance via placement of the main subject and, perhaps

most importantly, the exclusion of unwanted and distracting peripheral elements.

I was walking along the North Promenade in Whitby when I spotted this bench, one of several placed to provide moments of rest and silent reflection for passers by. Extracted compositions like this are often highly selective crops of reality; like theatre stages, they occupy our complete attention without distraction from the detritus that exists in the immediate off-stage vicinity, hidden from view. Unlike theatre stages, however, extracted landscape photographs provoke subliminal but intentional wonderment in the imagination of the viewer. Creative intellect is stimulated to conjure up a make-believe surrounding environment to the pictured scene. The intimation with this image is that what exists outside of the scene is simply more of the same, and that was indeed the wider reality. In many images, the value of obsessive and meticulous framing cannot be overstated;

it is a vital step, obscuring destructive elements that would otherwise destroy simplicity.

Landscape photographs often also benefit from the incorporation of a visual invitation: inclusion of foreground vicinity that invites us to step into the picture. A more blatant approach is to include an open gate or door or, in this case, an empty seat. Invitational devices offer the viewer an opportunity to individualise a photograph, but a scene like this offers the opportunity to mentally own it. The viewer can imagine anybody sitting on the bench, including him or herself. Just as the viewer creates his or her own narrative for the surrounding environment, the content of the image itself can often be most engaging when presented incompletely. ■

Whitby, North Yorkshire.
Fujifilm X-T1 with XF 18-55mm f/2.8-4 R LM OIS lens at 18mm, ISO 200, 30sec at f/16, Lee Seven5 system, 2-stop ND grad, Lee Big Stopper



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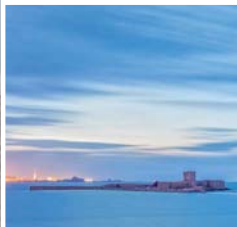
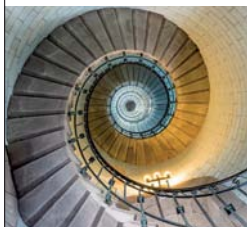
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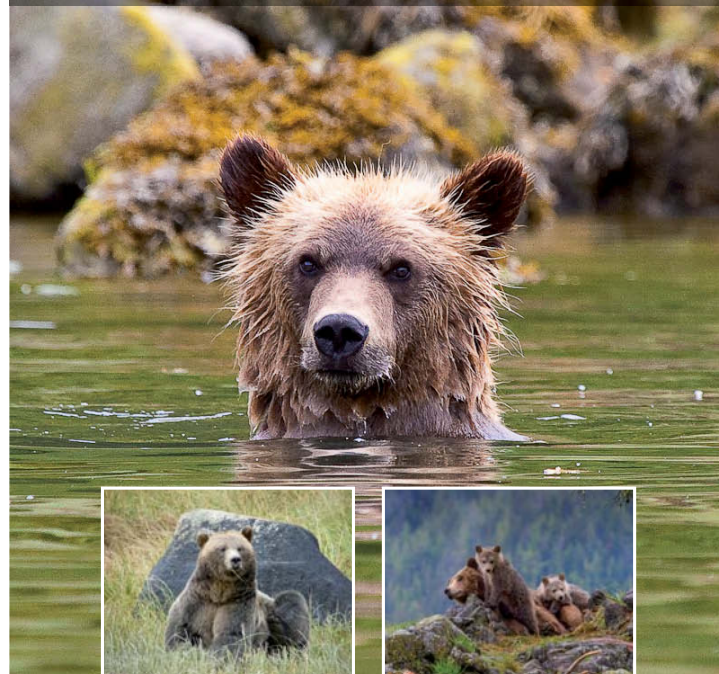
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Roberto Zampino

Roberto Zampino is a young and free-spirited Sicilian photographer whose entire work philosophy is controlled by his dedication to being 'out there' both physically and mentally. Nick Smith talks to him about life and photography



NICK SMITH It says on your blog that being a photographer has taught you 50 things about life. Is that true?

ROBERTO ZAMPINO Yes. I can remember my life before I was a photographer, and now I am being pushed further to achieve more than I ever could have. Being a photographer pushes me to travel more and explore more. Having a camera with me gives me the

confidence to talk to people. It has also taught me how to be more humble because I compare my work to that of great photographers.

NS It also says that you're a bit of a perfectionist...

RZ You should try never to get stuck or become content with what you have done before. You should always try new things. If you translate all of these things into

how you live your life, you can guarantee that it will always be interesting.

NS How do you describe your style?

RZ I shoot adventure, editorial, portrait, commercial, landscape and so on. But the important thing is that I try to approach these different ways of looking at the world with the same attitude. I try to be an 'out there' photographer. Even when I am doing wedding photography



I try to be 'out there', photographing as if I am doing reportage and really getting into the story itself.

NS What's your background?

RZ I studied fine art, photography and communication through media. While I was at university I started to climb a lot. And it was the climbing that put me into the mindset of getting outdoors. It was at this point that I tried to combine both my passions: the outdoors and photography. This led to me working on climbing guidebooks and festivals. Then I went to London College of Communication (LCC) to study photojournalism.

NS What happened at LCC?

RZ When you get into this kind of school you try to discover new things, and I tried a lot of things that didn't really

suit me. Then my professor said I should apply my aptitude for the outdoors to my photography. Since leaving school I have done what my professor told me!

NS You're not very interested in gear, are you?

RZ First comes the situation, second comes the gear. Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani said that these days even a donkey could take a photo with a good camera – all you have to do is put the camera on the donkey. I don't agree – it's all about ideas and perspective.

NS Why do you say there is no such thing as a perfect photograph?

RZ Well, I am usually not all that happy with my own work. I'm always thinking after a shoot that maybe I should have done this, or done that.

NS So when are you happy as a photographer?

RZ That comes when I have combined my research with getting out there and finally taking the shot. There are a lot of things that can go wrong, but it is important to know that you have put 100% of yourself into this thing.

opposite Deep water solo climbing at Syracuse, Sicily.

above An image from Roberto's 'Piscaturi' project, which documents changing fishing practices in Sicily.

ROBERTO'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is...** a notepad. That's always in my backpack and it is as important as my camera. I always take notes.

» **My one piece of advice would be to...** try not to emulate anything by anybody. That's the main problem with photography and life.

» **Something I try to avoid is...** getting lost. Both emotionally and physically.

ROBERTO'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

2009 Got out there and into climbing. It changed my life and my approach to it.

2010 Walked the length of the Camino de Santiago and shot my first reportage.

2010 Shortlisted in the youth category of National Geographic photo competition.

2012 Got back into the wilderness by hiking the GR20 long-distance trail.

2013 Went to LCC to study photojournalism and had a 'what shall I do?' crisis.

2014 Started running workshops and courses in my hometown of Syracuse, Sicily.

To see more of Roberto's work visit robertozampinophoto.com

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Loch Etchachan, Highland, by Paul Holloway

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by OP. Walk distances are one-way only):



1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.



2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.



3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.



4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.



5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

42 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 **Blue Lagoon** Pembrokeshire
- 2 **Ladder Hills** Highland

46 Viewpoints

- 3 **Lilstock beach** Somerset
- 4 **Girvan Harbour** Ayrshire
- 5 **Loch Etchachan** Highland
- 6 **Elmley National Nature Reserve** Kent
- 7 **The Glyders** Gwynedd/Conwy
- 8 **Sron a' Chlachain** Stirling
- 9 **Bamford Edge** Derbyshire
- 10 **Meal a' Bhuiridh** Highland

Map plottings are approximate



Blue Lagoon, Pembrokeshire

One of Pembrokeshire's wildest stretches of coastline draws Andrew Ray to its shores, and he sets about capturing its natural beauty and the remains of its industrial past

The Blue Lagoon is a former slate quarry near Aberiddy on the Pembrokeshire coast, which used to be connected by tramway to the harbour at Porthgain. Production at the site ceased abruptly in 1904 when the quarry was flooded during a storm that created a 25-metre deep lagoon. Clear signs of its industrial past are still present, however, including numerous spoil heaps and the ruins of former quarry buildings. Near the beach there is also a small group of slate houses known as the Street, which were built for the quarry workers.

Today the area is a popular spot for coasteering and attracts geologists, walkers and divers, for whom a temporary diving platform was constructed for the 2012 and 2013 Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series.

There is a well-walked path leading from the car park at nearby Aberiddy beach, which passes information boards and crosses boardwalks and wooden bridges to reach the flooded quarry. From here, photogenic images of both the lagoon entrance and a nearby sea stack can be captured – these can be particularly effective subjects at or

around high tide when the surrounding gullies fill with water. For the more energetic, the coast path that climbs steeply above the lagoon is well worth the effort. This initially follows the cliff edge, with views of the lagoon, before continuing towards Porthgain via one of the most spectacular stretches of coastline in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

Capturing sunlight on the sea stack and the entrance to the lagoon can be problematic, as the steep cliff obscures them from early morning light, making mid to late morning the best time to visit for sunlit images. The hours around sunset also provide numerous photographic possibilities, especially during early spring and autumn when the sun sets in the most favourable direction.

I visited the area in late March last year during a two-week trip to photograph the Pembrokeshire coastline. The car park at Aberiddy had been badly affected by the previous month's storms, but thankfully there were no obvious signs of damage to the area around the lagoon. My first glimpse of it was from the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, while walking

right Blue Lagoon at sunset.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm lens at 20mm, ISO 50, 6sec at f/19, 0.6 and 0.9 ND grads, polariser, remote release, tripod

below Sea stack at the Blue Lagoon.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm lens at 25mm, ISO 50, 2sec at f/19 0.9 ND grad, 1.2 ND grad, polariser, tripod cable release



from Porthgain to Aberiddy. The view along the coast towards the small, round tower that overlooks Aberiddy, with St David's Head in the distance, was spectacular, but an overcast sky, heavy showers and a brisk wind made for conditions that were far from ideal for landscape photography. I therefore decided to return later in the week.

By the final evening of my first week the wind had dropped and conditions were looking promising for a colourful sunset. After capturing images from the nearby beach, I opted to take the steep climb up to a pre-selected position on the cliff edge. The sun was still visible in the sky, which was proving problematic because it was continuously moving out of alignment with Aberiddy Tower on



the distant headland. To counteract this, I had to keep re-positioning my tripod-mounted camera. There was also a large brightness differential between the foreground cliffs and the much brighter sky to contend with. This required the use of two neutral-density graduated filters over the upper third of the frame to balance the exposure. A polariser was also utilised to reduce the amount of light reaching the sensor, in order to slow the shutter speed sufficiently to blur and flatten the movement on the surface of the water in the lagoon.

The resulting Raw file (for the image above) was processed in Lightroom 5, where minor global adjustments were applied. I then made Exposure, Shadow and Saturation adjustments to the sky. ■

5 miles from St David's | 12 miles from Fishguard | ACCESS RATING 

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Haverfordwest, follow the B4330 to the village of Croesgoch (14 miles). Turn left on to the A487, then take the second turning on the right (Aberystwyth Road). After one mile turn right again, then go straight ahead at a crossroads to reach the car park at Aberystwyth (one mile). The path to the Blue Lagoon is on the north (far) side of the car park.

What to shoot Former slate quarry and nearby sea stack.

Best time of day Late morning or sunset for sunlit images.

Nearest food/drink The Sloop Inn, Porthgain, SA62 5BN, 01348 831449, sloop.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Caerhys B&B, Berea, St Davids, SA62 6DX, 01348 831244, organic-farm-holidays.co.uk.

Other times of year The sun sets in a similar place in spring and early autumn.

Ordnance Survey map LR 157

Nearby locations Porthgain Harbour (3 miles); Carreg Samson (5 miles).



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Ladder Hills, Highland

Venturing out into the Cairngorms with a telephoto lens, David Chapman hopes to photograph the area's winter wildlife but beautiful light makes the dramatic snowy landscape irresistible

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 300mm lens, ISO 400, 1/1600sec at f/8, handheld

The Ladder Hills form part of the Glenlivet Estate in the north-east corner of the Cairngorms National Park. Compared to the main Cairngorm mountains, these hills are relatively small, and so are often overlooked by visitors to the area. They are set within impressive scenery, however, so there is potential for great landscape photos.

From the car park, the track leads first to the old College of Scalan. The word 'scalan' means a turf roof and the 'college' is an old seminary that now serves as a farmstead. These buildings provide one of the first focal points for a photo set against the hills beyond. Further along the track is the Clash of Scalan, 'clash' meaning a narrow valley. This ruined hamlet provides further

photographic potential, as does the stream (the Crombie Water) and the track between these locations.

On the day of my visit, there had been heavy snow, and to begin with it was very dull. In the afternoon, though, brief glimpses of sunlight began to break through the heavy cloud. The gentle light of the low winter sun provided the necessary drama, and because most of the foreground was in shade I used my telephoto lens to pick out distant features to create a pleasing balance in the frame. The recession of valleys, trees and hills leading into the distance is enhanced by the areas of shadow and light falling across the slopes. I particularly like the way in which the two rows of trees add depth to the image; one is lit by the sun and the other is in shade.

I wanted to darken the top of the image to increase the drama of the wonderful sky, but I couldn't use a graduated filter with the 300mm f/2.8 lens. To overcome this I exposed carefully, making sure not to burn out any of the snowy areas, and then applied a graduated filter in post-processing.

The location is a good place for seeing wading birds such as lapwing, curlew and snipe. There's also the chance of mountain hares. Initially I had gone into the area looking for wildlife, hence why I was carrying the telephoto lens. I came away with better photos of landscapes than wildlife; it's always best to be open-minded! ■



21 miles from Grantown-on-Spey | 37 miles from Braemar | ACCESS RATING 

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Grantown-on-Spey, take the A939 to Tomintoul then keep left on to the B9008 towards Tomnavoulin; after about four miles turn right at Knockandhu on to a minor road to Chapeltown. Continue to the end of the road and track to park in Eskemulloch car park beside a wood. From here, take the footpath to the left alongside the woodland. Cross a field to the farm buildings at Scalan, head right, then continue up the valley towards the Clash of Scalan.

What to shoot Distant mountain landscapes; the farm buildings of Scalan and the ruined buildings at the Clash of Scalan; various sections

of woodland. The track and the river can be used as foreground.

Best time of day Late afternoon and evening is best for the light.

Nearest food/drink Glen Avon Hotel, The Square, Tomintoul, AB37 9ET, 01807 580218, glenavon-hotel.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Glen Avon Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Summer can be good when the heather is in flower.

Ordnance Survey map LR 36

Nearby locations Loch Garten (24 miles); Loch an Eilein (38 miles).

LOCATIONS GUIDE & great places to photograph this month

VIEWPOINTS

14 miles from Bridgwater | 50 miles from Bristol | ACCESS RATING

Lilstock beach, Somerset

Flat expanses of cracked rock pavement and remnants of an old pier are hidden among the pebbles of Lilstock beach. While fossil hunters and photographers usually flock to the neighbouring beach at Kilve, Lilstock offers its own character to those who look carefully enough. Most of the beach's features are revealed at low tide.

How to get there From Bridgwater, travel west on the A39 towards Minehead. Shortly after the village of Holford, take a right turn, signposted Lilstock. Follow signposts for two miles. Turn left on to a rough track, which is marked by a small sign for the beach. The car park and beach are at the end of the track.

What to shoot Seascapes and abstracts.



© Stephen Spraggon

Best time of day Late afternoon/evening.

Nearest food/drink The Hood Arms, Kilve, near Bridgwater, TA5 1EA, 01278 741210, thehoodarms.com.

Nearest accommodation The Hood Arms – as above.

Other times of year Spring to mid-autumn, as the sun sets over the Bristol Channel.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 140

Nearby locations Kilve beach (3 miles); Staple Plain (6 miles).



21 miles from Ayr | 30 miles from Stranraer | ACCESS RATING

Girvan Harbour, Ayrshire

Girvan is an easily accessible location from which to photograph the island of Ailsa Craig. The town's harbour looks directly out to this volcanic island, situated at the mouth of the Firth of Clyde. The island is home to thousands of gannets, which are easily seen from the harbour. By approaching from the northern car park, it is possible to frame Ailsa Craig between the harbour's walls and beacons.

How to get there From Ayr, take the A77 south towards Stranraer. After entering Girvan, turn right at the first T-junction, following signs for Stranraer, and take the second exit at the first roundabout and follow signs for the public car park. Alternatively, turn right on to Golf Course Road, cross the bridge and follow the road round to the right. Continue along Golf Course Road, taking the left-hand turn, until you arrive at the car park at the



end of the road. Alternatively, there is a railway station, with trains running to and from Ayr/Glasgow and Stranraer.

What to shoot Ailsa Craig and coastal landscapes; seabirds and wildlife.

Best time of day Sunset.

Nearest food/drink Graziano's, 37 Knockcushan Street, Girvan, KA26 9AG, 01465 713174, harbourbargirvan.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Woodland Bay Hotel, Girvan, KA26 0HP, 01465 710700, woodlandbayhotel.co.uk.

Other times of year September for sunsets directly behind Ailsa Craig.

Ordnance Survey map LR 76

Nearby locations Byne Hill (1 mile); Turnberry Lighthouse (6 miles).



© Aidan Macconnick

16 miles from Braemar | 65 miles from Perth

ACCESS RATING     

Loch Etchachan, Highland

Situated in the heart of the Cairngorm mountains, 900 metres above sea level, Loch Etchachan is the highest loch of its size in the UK. This is scenery on a grand scale, with the loch nestled between the heights of Ben MacDui and Beinn Mheadoin.

How to get there From Perth, take the A93 to Braemar then turn off left through Braemar village and follow the minor road to Inverey and Linn of Dee. After six miles, park at the Linn of Dee car park. The 10-mile route to Loch Etchachan is on good paths via Derry Lodge, but requires an OS map and appropriate hill walking gear for a long hike into the hills.

What to shoot Shoot across the loch towards Ben MacDui and the cliffs of Carn Etchachan.

Best time of day Around dawn and dusk.

Nearest food/drink Taste coffee shop & deli, Airlie House, Braemar, AB35 5YT,

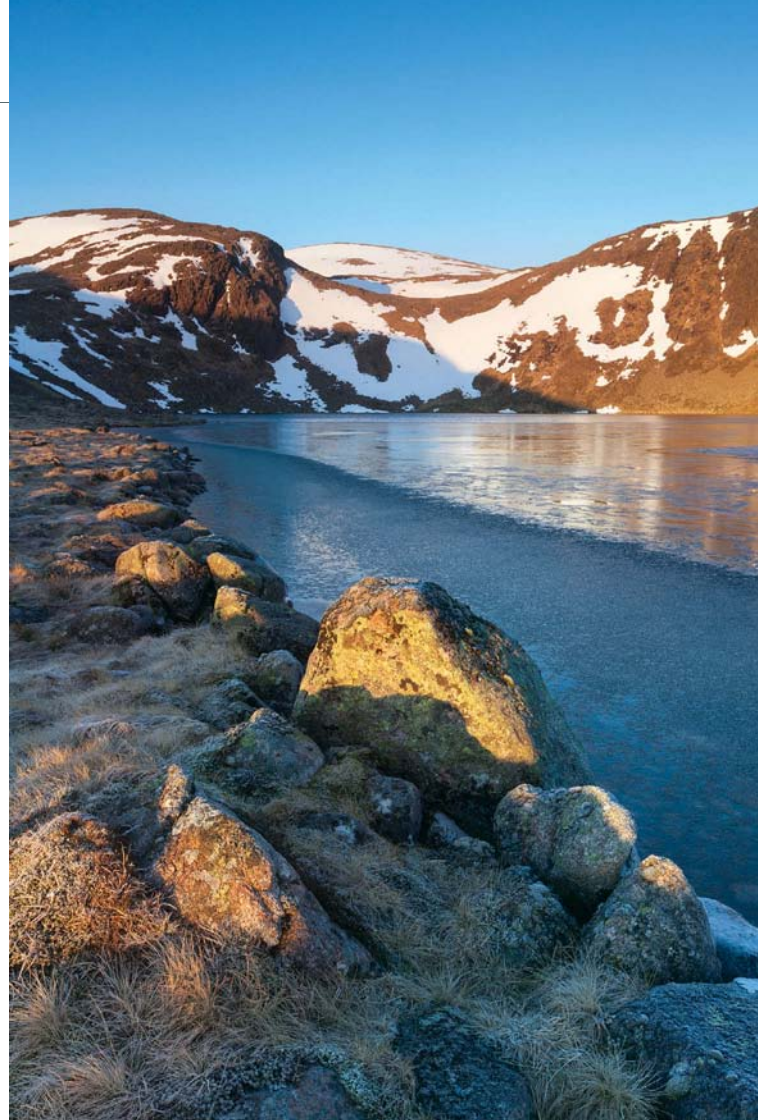
01339 741425, taste-braemar.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Craiglea B&B, Hillside Road, Braemar, AB35 5YU, 01339 741641, craigleabraemar.com.

Other times of year This is a good location all year round.

Ordnance Survey map LR 43 and LR 36

Nearby locations Loch Avon (2 miles); Ben MacDui (2 miles).



© Paul Holloway

8 miles from Sittingbourne | 18 miles from Maidstone

ACCESS RATING     

Elmley National Nature Reserve, Kent

Elmley National Nature Reserve is a special landscape, where remote and peaceful meadows and waterways are dominated by huge, ever-changing skies. The wide expanse of grazing marsh is renowned as one of the UK's best places for wildlife.

How to get there From junction 5 on the M2, follow the A249 towards Sheerness. The reserve is signposted from the exit for Iwade and Ridham Dock, which is immediately before the Sheppey bridge. At the roundabout, take the second exit on to the old road bridge. On the Isle of Sheppey, after a minute or two, take the first right, following the brown Elmley NNR sign. There is a two-mile access road to the car park at Kingshill Farm.

What to shoot Good views over the marshes, and skylines. The area is also a haven for wildlife, including hares, stoats, raptors, owls, waders and insects.

Best time of day Dawn and sunrise.

Nearest food/drink The Ferry House Inn, Harty Ferry Road, Harty, ME12 4BQ, 01795 510214, theferryhouseinn.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Elmley has three custom-built shepherds' huts, available for overnight hire: Elmley National Nature Reserve, Kingshill Farm, Sheerness, ME12 3RW, 07786 333331, elmleynaturereserve.co.uk/stay.

Other times of year Autumn for migratory birds; winter for frosty mornings.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 149

Nearby locations Capel Fleet raptor viewpoint (8 miles); The Swale National Nature Reserve (9 miles).



© Ian Hutton



The Glyders, Gwynedd/Conwy

The Glyder ridge is one of the most amazing in Snowdonia. From the summit, views to the valleys and the nearby mountains are incredible. The Glyders also have numerous bizarre rock structures, such as Castell y Gwynt, at the summit. These can provide good foreground interest and are also photogenic subjects in themselves.

How to get there Parking is at one of the lay-bys along the A5 after Capel Curig. The path begins at Ogwen Cottage. The route to the top of the Glyders is reasonably established, but it can still be tricky in adverse weather such as low cloud, snow and ice. It should take about two to three hours to reach the summit.

What to shoot Dramatic rock structures at the summits of Glyder Fach and Glyder Fawr; panoramic views of surrounding mountains, including Snowdon.

Best time of day Sunrise or sunset for long shadows and subtle light.

Nearest food/drink Pinnacle Café, Capel Curig, LL24 0EN, 01690 720201, pinnaclepursuits.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Tyn-y-Coed Inn, Capel Curig, LL23 0EE, 01690 720331, tyn-y-coed.co.uk.

Other times of year Snowdonia offers great photo opportunities year-round.

Ordnance Survey map OL 17

Nearby locations Llynau Mymbyr (5 miles); Mount Snowdon (12 miles).



10 miles from Betws-y-Coed | 10 miles from Bangor | ACCESS RATING

21.5 miles from Callander | 37 miles from Stirling | ACCESS RATING



Sron a'Chlachain, Stirling

The craggy hill of Sron a'Chlachain rises above Loch Tay and the gorgeous village of Killin. A short but steep climb to its 521-metre summit grants an astonishing view along much of the loch's 24-mile length. The breathtaking panorama also takes in the mighty Ben Lawers massif, which during early spring will still be thick with snow.

How to get there From Breadalbane car park in Killin, follow a path to a fork near Fingal's Stone. Keep to the right, following the path west into woodland. A steep path ascends above the tree line on to open hillside to another fork. Either path can be taken, and both climb steeply through craggy outcrops. The gradient eases as the path crosses



grassy hillside to gain the summit cairn.

What to shoot Expansive views along the river Tay, and mountains such as Ben Lawers, Beinn Ghlas and Ben Vorlich.

Best time of day The best vista is to the east, so late afternoon, but any time of day is good during late winter/early spring.

Nearest food/drink The Falls of Dochart Inn, Gray Street, Killin, FK21 8SL, 01567 820270, falls-of-dochart-inn.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Killin Hotel, Main Street, Killin, FK21 8TP, 01567 820296, killinhotel.com.

Other times of year The southern highlands of Scotland are stunning in autumn.

Ordnance Survey map LR 378

Nearby locations Falls of Dochart (0.5 miles); Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve (6 miles).

Bamford Edge, Derbyshire

Bamford Edge forms part of a stunning array of gritstone edges that stretch down the Peak District's eastern side, from Derwent Edge in the north to Birchen Edge in the south. Facing west and with rocky features typical of the Dark Peak, the gritstone edge towers over the village of Bamford and offers stunning evening views, most notably towards Ladybower Reservoir.

How to get there Follow the A6013 north out of Bamford. After about half a mile,



© Graham Dunn

turn right on to New Lane. Follow this road for approximately one mile, and park in a lay-by on the left, just after a road/track joins from the right-hand side. Head over a stile and walk up the hill, heading north. Follow the path, keeping to the left, until you reach Bamford Edge.

What to shoot Gritstone rocks and edge; views west towards Win Hill and Hope Valley; views north-west towards Ladybower Reservoir.

Best time of day Late afternoon.

Nearest food/drink Yorkshire Bridge Inn, Ashopton Road, Bamford, Hope Valley, S33 0AZ, 01433 651361, yorkshire-bridge.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Yorkshire Bridge Inn – as above.

Other times of year Also worth a visit in late summer when the heather is in full bloom.

Ordinance Survey map Explorer OL 1

Nearby locations Ladybower Reservoir (1 mile); Derwent Edge (4 miles).

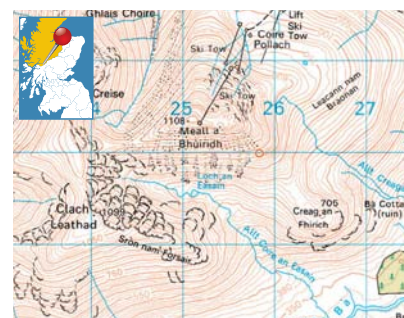
3 miles from Hathersage | 13 miles from Sheffield | ACCESS RATING

19 miles from Tyndrum | 29 miles from Fort William | ACCESS RATING

Meall a' Bhuiridh, Highland

Meall a' Bhuiridh offers outstanding views of the mountains that surround Rannoch Moor, including different aspects of Buachaille Etive Mòr. To the north, Ben Nevis can be seen, and is especially magnificent when covered in snow. From this vantage point a different composition for Rannoch Moor can be had, while to the east the Black Mount can be seen.

How to get there From the A9 at Stirling, take the A84 exit for Callander, following the road to Lochearnhead. Carry straight on through Lochearnhead, on the A85, and continue along through Crianlarich and onwards through Tyndrum (on the A82). Shortly after Tyndrum, the road forks; take the right fork, staying on the A82. Follow this road through Bridge of Orchy and up on to Rannoch Moor, and



keep going until you see the sign for the Glencoe ski centre, where you can park.

What to shoot Mountain vistas; broad lofty views of Rannoch Moor; steep plunging waterfalls.

Best time of day Dawn for views of Buachaille Etive Mòr; dusk for side-lighting on Ben Nevis.

Nearest food/drink Glencoe Ski Café, Glencoe, Argyll, PH49 4HZ, 01855 851226, glencoemountain.com.

Nearest accommodation Kings House Hotel, Glencoe, Argyll, PH49 4HY, 01855 851259, kingshousehotel.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for colourful foliage and snowcapped mountains.

Ordinance Survey map LR 41

Nearby locations Pass of Glencoe (9 miles); Victoria Bridge (12 miles).



© Carlton Doudney



On composition

With so much emphasis placed on creating carefully composed, standalone landscapes, many of us find it hard to understand images that break the 'rules' of photography. David Ward wonders if it's time to put traditional thinking aside and open our minds to less conventional approaches

While attending a recent landscape photography conference I was struck by how the work of Jem Southam polarised opinion among the delegates. For those of you not familiar with Jem's work, many of his images are very complex views of woodland or wider landscapes. They are invariably shot in soft light on 10x8 negative film. By comparison to chrome films or modern digital images they seem cool and unsaturated. More importantly, they also seem 'uncomposed'. Jem isn't trying to make freestanding 'masterpieces'; he has no wish to ape the tradition typified by the works of Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Michael Fatale and countless other landscape photographers. Rather, he wants to create series of images to tell some quiet stories in a quiet way. His photos really only work when considered as part of a whole: the overriding narrative is what gives them meaning. I don't make images in this way but I do admire Jem's ideas and the series that he makes.

I was far from alone in my admiration of Jem's work, but I did feel in the minority. While chatting to other delegates about his photographs, one phrase kept on recurring; 'I just don't get them!' To these photographers, his images were as devoid of meaning as a chunk of German text is to an English speaker; they can see that there are words, but have no idea what they signify. This started me thinking about what separated his work from what one might call the mainstream. I kept coming back to the images' apparent 'uncomposition'.

It can be argued that landscape photographers pay more attention to overt expressions of composition than landscape painters. One obvious example is the way photographers tend to 'work' the corners of an image. We like to see a strong line in a composition emanating from a corner or at least pointing towards one. But study any number of landscape paintings from the Renaissance through to the 20th century and you'll find hardly a sign of such an approach; the compositions aren't anchored in the corners; rather, these are typically left dark or lacking in significant detail.

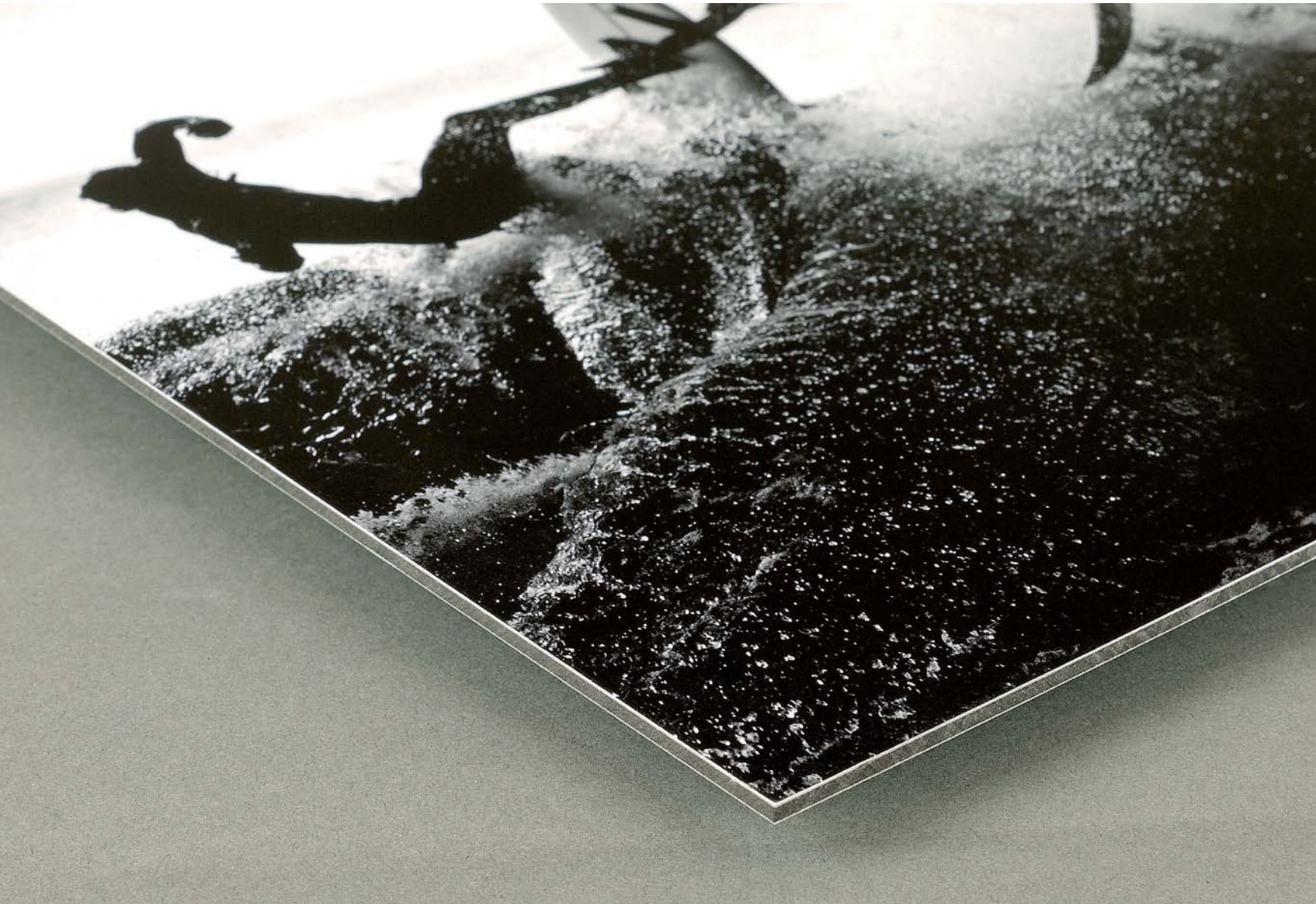
I feel that the photographers' bias arises because, as well as showing our craftsmanship, we want to stamp our identity, our way of seeing, on a portion of reality. Both painters and photographers start from the chaos and complexity of reality and attempt to somehow reduce that to a digestible, comprehensible and pleasing package of tone, line and colour. What separates the two is the fact that the photo springs *directly* from reality. Forget that we can manipulate it afterwards; any photo depends upon

a scene having existed in the real world and not just in the mind of the artist. A photograph is 'of' reality in a way that a painting never can be. By 'working the corners', for instance, we meld the 'truth' of a scene with our framing of that scene and thus announce our craftsmanship as well as our vision.

The medium's inherent veracity is at the heart of photography's power but is also, in the eyes of an artist, a major weakness. Painters have numerous ways of differentiating their way of seeing, from their choice of media (oils, watercolours, acrylic, etc.) to the substrate (canvas, paper, wood, etc.) and, most importantly, to the manner in which a painting is made. Realist painters have been freed from the previous slavish desire to mimic reality for more than a century; modern realists consciously emphasise how reality has been transformed through the mind of the artist. Their images are made from reality but they don't pretend to be real. Taken in conjunction with the variables I mentioned above, this allows for unique expressions of artistic vision and style. Unlike other visual media, there are no maker's marks in photography, so the colour photographer is, by comparison, seriously constrained (black & white photography is, to some extent, a special case.) The freedom of expression afforded to the Fauvists, for instance, is not available to landscape photographers. Photographs are invariably compared to our view of the real world and any that stray too far from our personal parameters tend to be severely criticised, or even completely disregarded.

So, if you can't transform reality in the overt way that a painter can, what means do you have to stamp your identity on the work? I think there are only two ways to do this; make artful compositions or make a series. A series enables the photographer to more consistently direct the viewers' attention, but it also allows for a more consistent expression of style. A lone image by Fay Godwin, for instance, might be mistaken for one by another photographer, but a series of her pictures is hard to misattribute. Artful compositions of individual images are, perhaps, an easier and more obviously satisfying option. After all, the most powerful tool the photographer has is the choice of how they frame a portion of reality, a choice that goes to the heart of composition. But I sincerely believe that there's also room for less strident images like Jem's. He may be speaking a foreign language to some, but I haven't heard many people doubt the validity of other languages in the way the validity of his images is doubted. Perhaps it is time that the 'mainstream' recognised other ways of seeing. ■

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Outdoor Photographer of the year 2014

In association with



CATEGORY WINNERS

What a competition it has been! With over 10,000 images entered and the overall standard being extraordinarily high, this has been the most successful and exciting OPOTY to date

The signs were there early in the competition entry period. A quick glance through the first images to be uploaded was an eye-opening experience – the quality of the images was breathtaking. And that trend continued all the way to deadline day.

It took us longer than expected to draw up the shortlists, and in the end they weren't very short at all! We're always aware that what one judge may dislike, another judge may select as a top pick; photography is, after all, very subjective. With so many outstanding photographs, it only seemed fair that more of them should be put in front of the final jury.

When Pete Bridgwood, Pete Webb, Andy Luck, Tracy Hallett and David Baker arrived in Lewes for judgement

day, they had little idea just how tough a job they had ahead of them. It only took an initial run through the 200+ images on the Light on the Land shortlist to have them shaking their heads and gasping in disbelief. 'How are we going to pick just one from all those?' was a common refrain.

In the end, and with lots of careful consideration, we got there. Of course, not every judge saw their personal favourites come out on top, but all of them agreed that any of the images in the final rounds were potentially worthy winners.

We hope you enjoy this showcase of the best of the amazing talent that is out there, and we thank everyone who entered. You have wowed us!

N.B. All the information about the images is on the last page of the feature.



Category winners' prizes and the overall winner

Each category winner receives a superb Fjällräven Kaipak 28 backpack plus £200. The overall winner, who wins an exclusive place on the Fjällräven Polar Arctic expedition in April, will be announced live on the OP PhotoBox stage at the Telegraph Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show at London ExCel on February 15th, and will be in the next issue. To find out more about the Fjällräven Kaipak 28 and Polar, go to fjallraven.co.uk









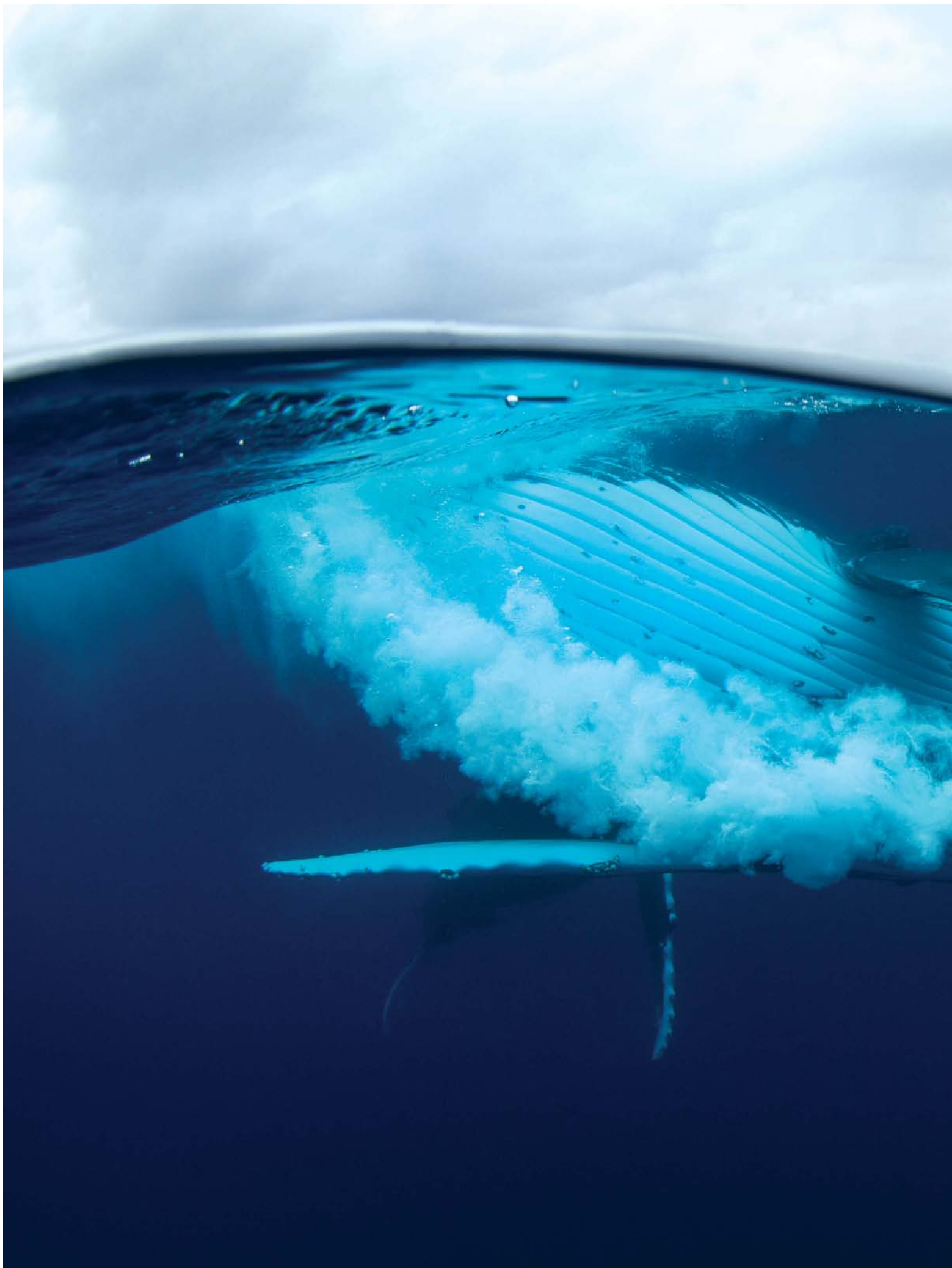
















YOUNG OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Josiah Launstein (Canada) – aged 10



Rocky Mountain bighorn rams do battle in the lower slopes of the Rocky Mountains in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada. I love bighorn sheep, so I jumped at the chance to go out with my dad and big sister looking for rams to photograph. I was going to follow my dad towards some bigger rams he spotted, when I heard these guys head-butting at the edge of the forest. There wasn't much light left so I had to use a higher ISO to freeze the action, but I'm glad I was able to capture this picture just as they rammed into each other!

Nikon D7100 with Nikkor AF-S 300mm f/4D IF-ED lens with Kirk NC-300 lens collar, ISO 2800, 1/1250sec at f/4.5, Feisol CM-1471 carbon fibre monopod with QRC-50 quick release clamp, converted from Raw using Phase One Capture One Pro 7, adjustments to tone and contrast in Photoshop CS5, converted to black & white using Nik Silver Efex Pro 2, cropped to minimise distraction from third ram in background

launsteinimagery.com

LIGHT ON THE LAND

Greg Whitton (UK)



After a week of tough hiking in the southern highlands of Iceland, it was our last night of wild camping. We pitched our tents below a minor peak, and the view from the top was incredible. Thick cloud to the west was all but blocking the sun, however, so, feeling rather dejected, I began to descend to camp after waiting several hours at the top. After about 50 metres of descent across loose vegetation and rock a small gap in the clouds suddenly appeared, and along with the changing azimuth of the sun they combined to gloriously illuminate the landscape. The light lasted no longer than a few minutes, and I was fortunate to find some kind of foreground element to compose the vista against. There was no time for filters, and only just enough time to erect the tripod, compose and fire bracketed exposures, all done on instinct.

Fuji X-T1 with XF10-24mm lens at 10mm, ISO 200, 1/10sec at f/11, -0.33EV, tripod, post-processing in Lightroom, exposure recovery for foreground, highlight recovery, clarity and curves, post-process linear and select radial grad, minor dodging and burning, sharpening appropriate to Fuji RAF file

gregwhittonphotography.com

WILDLIFE INSIGHT

Stefan Gerrits (Netherlands)



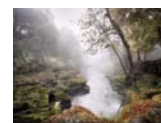
Unlike the story of so many other species, the reintroduction of the Arabian oryx into the wild, after the species went extinct in the wild in the 1970s, is a success. There are now over 1,000 individuals living in the wild. I have been living in the United Arab Emirates for some years, and been into the desert many times to find and photograph the elusive Arabian oryx. On this particular day, I witnessed a scene I had been dreaming of. I drove the 4x4 carefully into position and placed the oryx at the edge of the viewfinder to reflect the sense of emptiness in the desert. I converted the image to black & white to convey the beauty of this desert dweller in the most optimal and simple way.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8 IS II USM lens and 2x MkIII extender at 400mm, ISO 100, 1/100sec at f/5.6, beanbag, post-processed with Silver Efex Pro

stefangerrits.com

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Shaun Walby (UK)



The river Wharfe has its origin in the upper northern Yorkshire Dales, and it narrows considerably at a place known as 'the Strid' on the Bolton Abbey estate. I got to work quickly, as the light and weather conditions were changing rapidly. It was the combination of elements within the scene that raised my interest level. Golden autumn leaves on the ground balanced the heavy damp air and foliage, and the central river merging with the fog in the distance provided a sense of depth. I chose a long shutter speed to soften the water movement and to instill a sense of time. The autumn sun filtered by the fog provided wonderful diffuse light.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM lens at 19mm, ISO 100, 0.4sec at f/11, Lee 2-stop 0.6 ND grad, Manfrotto 055CXPRO3 tripod, cable release, post-processing was minor adjustments to highlights and contrast in Lightroom and Photoshop

shaunwalbyphotography.com

SMALL WORLD

Johannes Klapwijk (Netherlands)



I love to photograph insects in the early morning because of the wonderful atmosphere around sunrise. The idea grew in my mind to capture a butterfly opening up to catch the warmth of the first rays of sun. It took some time to find the right location that matched with the pre-visualised image in my head. I visited this particular place multiple times in search of subjects before conditions were perfect.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Sigma 150mm f/2.8 macro lens, ISO 100, 1/1250sec at f/2.8, tripod, minor post-processing including sharpening and subtle contrast enhancement via curves

johannesklapwijk.com

UNDER EXPOSED

Craig Parry (Australia)



I captured this image in Tonga in the South Pacific. Using a small aperture, I was able to keep the sky in focus as well as the humpback whale. I used an Aquatech housing with a fisheye port that enabled me to split the image under and over the water's surface.

Canon EOS 1DX with Canon fisheye 8-15mm lens at 15mm, ISO 800, 1/250sec at f/18, Aquatech underwater housing, post-processing included minor white balance adjustments, dodging and burning, exposure adjustments, sharpening

craigparryphotography.com

LIVE THE ADVENTURE

Sandi Bertoneclj (Slovenia)



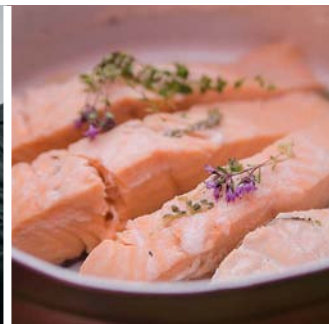
The weather conditions were extraordinary that day on 2104m Vajnež mountain in the Karavanke Alps in Slovenia. When we arrived on skis under the saddle we were confronted with a heavy windstorm. The sunbeams were penetrating the thin clouds and spindrift. I wanted to capture the sense of struggle involved as the heavy gusts tried to throw us off balance as we made our way towards the summit.

Canon EOS 7D with EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM lens at 22mm, ISO 200, 1/800sec at f/20, Converted to black & white and cropped in Lightroom, adjustments to contrast, exposure and highlights

500px.com/berto

NEXT MONTH

The overall winner will be revealed in the next issue, on sale 12 March, along with judges' comments on the winning images and an extended showcase of the commended photographs – don't miss it!



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CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Laurie Campbell on photographing bank voles and other small animals



Life in the Wild

Sometimes the best way to renew your enthusiasm for a particular subject is to step back from it for a while, says Laurie Campbell, who has recently returned to a project to photograph a colony of bank voles living in a stone wall just outside his office door

This is one of the few photographs I have of a bank vole facing the camera. It captures the moment it paused for a quick look round before emerging fully from its burrow between the rocks in the wall. This is something they often do before venturing out.
Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens with 1.4x teleconverter and Kenko 12mm extension tube, ISO 1250, 1/500sec at f/6.3, beanbag

Isn't it curious how your enthusiasm for photographing just about any subject can wax and wane from time to time?

I recall a commission I once undertook, back in the days of film, to illustrate a book about badgers. I worked fairly intensively for over a year on that project, concentrating all my efforts on photographing a clan of badgers at a sett located two fields from my home, which I had first discovered as a 14-year-old boy. I began by drawing up a 'wish list' of as many different aspects of badgers that I thought might be possible to photograph, but by the time the book deadline came and went, my list had grown exponentially because I'd learnt so much more about their lives.

The risk of immersing yourself in a particular subject, or limiting yourself to photographing within small areas for extended periods, is that a feeling of complacency can set in. The subject



Parting some trailing ivy, I discovered this collection of cherry stones; the cherries had been gathered and subsequently eaten by a wood mouse. Had the cherries been eaten by a bank vole, the edges of the holes would have been rougher.
Nikon D3X with Nikon 200mm f/4 macro lens, ISO 100, 3sec at f/29, cable release, mirror-lock, tripod



I was lucky to get this picture, because it shows a bank vole that has paused momentarily while out in the open. This was possibly a reaction to a nearby hedge sparrow, which was feeding on the bait I had put out for the vole.
Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens with 1.4x teleconverter and Kenko 12mm extension tube, ISO 1250, 1/500sec at f/7.1, beanbag



For photographs that required the use of an extension tube, I cropped the images slightly to remove the effects of vignetting in the corners. From a Nikon D4, the amount of cropping is equal to the size of file from a Nikon D3S camera – reducing the width of the image from 42cm to 36.5cm.
Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens with 1.4x teleconverter and Kenko 12mm extension tube, ISO 1250, 1/500sec at f/6.3, beanbag

can lose its initial appeal and freshness, triggering an urge to start working on something new. I don't mind admitting this happens to me from time to time, but as I've intimated before in this column, staying motivated can sometimes become a bit of a psychological battle. To rekindle some enthusiasm, it's often a good idea to simply step back from a subject and take a break before returning to look at it once again – hopefully from a different perspective. Sometimes the solution can be found in using a bit of technology that perhaps wasn't available first time round.

I'm reminded of the benefits of revisiting photo projects as I sit here in my home office, where I occasionally glance through the glass in the patio door to check whether the sunflower seed hearts that I sprinkled earlier on a dry stone retaining wall are still in place. I constructed the wall shortly after moving into the house, and over the years it has been colonised in places by mosses, ivy and wild strawberries, together with a vast range of invertebrates – from millipedes to banded snails. There are mammal inhabitants, too; primarily bank voles and the occasional wood mouse, and these are the animals I am trying to tempt into view.

The last time I had photographed either of these rodents was in 2006, when I found a very young, possibly orphaned, wood mouse. I took it into captivity temporarily and photographed it once it had grown a little more. At the time, I used a Nikon D2X with a Nikon

70-180mm macro lens and diffused flash. I'd surmised that this was the best approach because I was aware of the limitations of the ISO capabilities of the D2X, and I'd learnt never to shoot with it above ISO 400. It seemed a non-starter to think about using it to photograph

hyperactive mammals in shady locations.

Of course the bank voles have been there all along, but it took me a good few years to start photographing them again.

I returned to the project with renewed enthusiasm, thanks to improvements in digital camera sensor technology. ■

Laurie's Factfile

Tips for photographing small mammals

» Photographing small mammals outdoors is not unlike working with small garden birds such as wrens and blue tits. They are usually very fidgety and rarely keep still for any length of time, so it is necessary to use rapid, pinpoint-accurate, single-point autofocus and short shutter speeds of around 1/500sec or less. The added difficulty with small mammals is that they will invariably react to the sound of a shutter going off, and they are extremely slow (if at all) to becoming conditioned to it. Shoot a sequence of two or more frames at a longish shutter speed, of say 1/125sec, and it is likely that only the first is going to be reasonably sharp compared to the following ones, in which the animal will have reacted to the shutter sound with a jerking motion, blurring the image.

» There are a number of ways of dealing with this, such as shooting selectively and using single frame advance when shooting portraits. Some cameras obviously have quieter shutters than others, although it is often possible to improvise a makeshift 'blimp' by wrapping the likes of a fleece or woollen scarf around the camera body. Mirrorless camera systems have an obvious advantage in this respect.

» Maintaining a reasonable working distance from the subject can help, too. This obviously depends on the focal length of your lens, because there is a fine balance between being close enough so that it appears big enough in the frame, but not too close that you risk disturbing the animal. Fortunately, most modern long lenses focus fairly close, and a focal length of 300mm to 500mm works best when photographing from a distance of three to five metres from the subject. Cropped sensor cameras are a bonus here, too.

» If you have problems getting a long lens to focus close enough, then try using a 1.4x teleconverter to obtain more magnification at the lens's minimum focusing distance. Alternatively, you can use thin extension tubes. Canon users have a distinct advantage here, because Canon offers up-to-date extension tubes with electrical connections that allow data transfer between camera and lens; this means autofocus and exposure metering are maintained. Nikon users have to resort to the third-party extension tubes from Kenko to achieve this, but because the internal diameter of these is less than the old manual focus Nikon PK series tubes, they can cause serious vignetting with many lenses on full-frame cameras.

What to shoot this month...

Laurie's March highlights



▲ The prospect of photographing **black grouse** (*Tetrao tetrix*) displaying at their traditional lekking sites early in the morning is exciting for the sheer spectacle of the sights and sounds of the competing males in action. But if things don't quite go to plan and you don't capture all that you anticipated, then consider photographing other aspects of the birds once they have left the lek for the day; they typically head for areas of woodland to feed on the buds of birch and larch.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens and 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 500, 1/800sec at f/6.3, beanbag (using minibus as hide)



▲ February and March are two of the best months of the year to see **golden eagles** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) displaying in the air as a prelude to the nesting season. Bright, windy days are best, even if it is classic rainbow weather with the odd blustery shower. The courting display flights are very likely to happen at extreme range, so long lenses with teleconverters are recommended. If you want to fully capture their aerobatic prowess, think about shooting video as opposed to stills. *Nikon D3S with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens with 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 1000, 1/2000sec at f/6.3, handheld*



◀ For those impatient to photograph the first flush of fresh green foliage from deciduous trees, spare a thought for the buds that have packaged and protected the developing leaves throughout winter. The sticky buds of horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are among the first to open; the tree got its name from the horseshoe-shaped scars that are left on the twigs when leaves are shed. Another interesting species is **ash** (*Fraxinus excelsior*); its black buds are among the last to break – see image, left. *Nikon D2X with Nikon 200mm f/4 macro lens, ISO 125, 0.4sec at f/20, cable release, mirror-lock, tripod*

▲ **Lesser celandine** (*Ranunculus ficaria*) is a widespread but often overlooked spring flower of damp ground and woodland that blooms from late February to May. When in shade, the petals close and the flower loses its star-shaped appearance, which is slightly awkward to compose in a rectangular frame. For a different view, get down on the ground and place a longish macro lens or close-focusing zoom on a beanbag and shoot from a lower angle using a wide aperture and selective focusing. *Nikon D3X with Voigtlander APO-Lathar 120mm f/2.5 macro lens, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/2.8, beanbag*



MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

Flora

Silver birch (*Betula pendula*) – look for close-up potential in the peeling bark of the trunks of young trees.

White butterbur (*Petasites albus*) – this is a plant of damp woodlands and riversides, with large, exotic-looking flowers, whose stems erupt from the ground before the large leaves.

Crocus (*Crocus purpureus*) – it may be a cultivated and introduced species, but it is very widespread and a welcome source of nectar for early bumblebees.

Fauna

Common/smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) – much smaller than the great-crested newt, but the males are just as impressive when seen in breeding colours.

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – hungry animals emerge from hibernation around now, if the weather allows; they are likely to welcome some cat food or formulated hedgehog food left out overnight in a garden setting.

European beaver (*Castor fiber*) – with the lengthening hours of daylight and an absence of dense, bankside vegetation, this is a good time of year to get clear views of beavers at either end of the day.

WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES

Green sea turtles, Ascension

Ascension Island, a tiny volcanic outpost in the mid-Atlantic, has one of the world's largest populations of green sea turtles. Each year, thousands of turtles migrate at least 1,400 miles from feeding grounds off the Brazilian coast to reach the island. During the nesting season (January-April), females lay up to nine batches of 80-150 eggs, which they bury in the sand.



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Snow geese, USA

At the end of winter, millions of snow geese fly north from winter areas in southern America to breeding areas in the Arctic; a journey of up to 3,000 miles. The largest gatherings occur in spring and autumn, at traditional migration stopovers in Midwest America. Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota is one such staging area – over one million geese can be seen here between March and early April.

10 TOP EARLY SPRING DAYS OUT

Spring is one of the busiest times in the natural world, and we are beginning to see the initial signs of new life and animal activity – from the first flowers of the season to the emergence of hibernating creatures. Here are some top locations and walks to get you closer to the action...

1 Sizergh wildlife walk, Cumbria

The hawfinch (right) is one of the spring highlights at Sizergh near Kendal; they are resident year-round but are easiest to spot in early spring when leaves are absent. The estate also has woodland wildflowers, such as daffodils, and offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside. nationaltrust.org.uk/sizergh

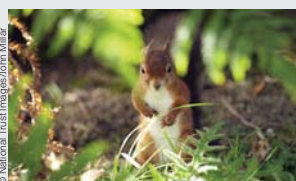


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2 Wood of Cree, Dumfries and Galloway

Located close to Newton Stewart, this large area of ancient woodland comes alive in spring; birdsong fills the air, red squirrels are busy in the trees and woodland flowers abound. An observation platform overlooking the river Cree gives you a chance of other sightings. rspb.org.uk/woodofcree

3 Brownsea Island, Dorset



© National Trust Images/John Miller

Dramatically located in Poole Harbour, Brownsea Island is famous for its red squirrels, which are at their most active in spring, especially at sunrise and sunset. Early spring (until mid-March) is also one of the best times to see the rare migratory birds that winter on the island's lagoons. nationaltrust.org.uk/brownsea-island

4 Newton Pool coastal walk, Northumberland

In spring, you can see murmurations of over 1,000 skylarks during this gentle, one-mile walk, which takes in sand dunes, wetlands,

unspoilt beaches and views of Dunstanburgh Castle. Look for early coastal flowers, wigeon and teal in breeding plumage, and mating frogs and toads. nationaltrust.org.uk/embleton-and-newton-links

5 Daffodil walk, Farndale, North Yorkshire

Enjoy a classic springtime walk at Farndale, a secluded valley in the heart of the North York Moors, where swathes of wild daffodils cover the wooded banks of the river Dove. The flowers are usually in bloom between mid-March and mid-April. northyorkmoors.org.uk

6 Hardcastle Crag woodland wildlife walk, West Yorkshire

With unspoilt woodland, stunning riverside views, tumbling streams, miles of footpaths and a wealth of wildlife, this beauty spot near Hebden Bridge is the perfect place to enjoy the profusion of new life in spring. nationaltrust.org.uk/hardcastle-crag

7 Sheringham Park woodland and coastal walk, Norfolk

Spot the first signs of spring on this varied seven-mile walk through parkland, woods and fields and along cliff edge. Listen out for skylarks at the coast and look for snowdrops

in the woodland. nationaltrust.org.uk/sheringham-park

8 Hare watching on Havergate Island, Suffolk

Located on the river Ore, Havergate Island is famous for its breeding terns and avocets. It also has a thriving population of brown hares, which are most active in early spring. Access is by boat, and pre-booking is essential – please see website for details. rspb.org.uk/havergate

9 Daffodils at Dunsford, Devon

Dunsford nature reserve boasts one of Britain's finest annual displays of daffodils. Lying alongside the river Teign, the reserve has a rich variety of habitats and wildlife, including otters, roe deer, woodpeckers and dippers. devonwildlifetrust.org/reserve/Dunsford/

10 St David's peninsula walk, Pembrokeshire

Flowering plants such as thrift, gorse and sea campion turn the Pembrokeshire coast into a blaze of colour in spring. As temperatures rise, butterflies take to the air and lizards emerge. The National Trust offers a rugged two-mile walk that explores the area's most spectacular headland. nationaltrust.org.uk/st-davids-peninsula

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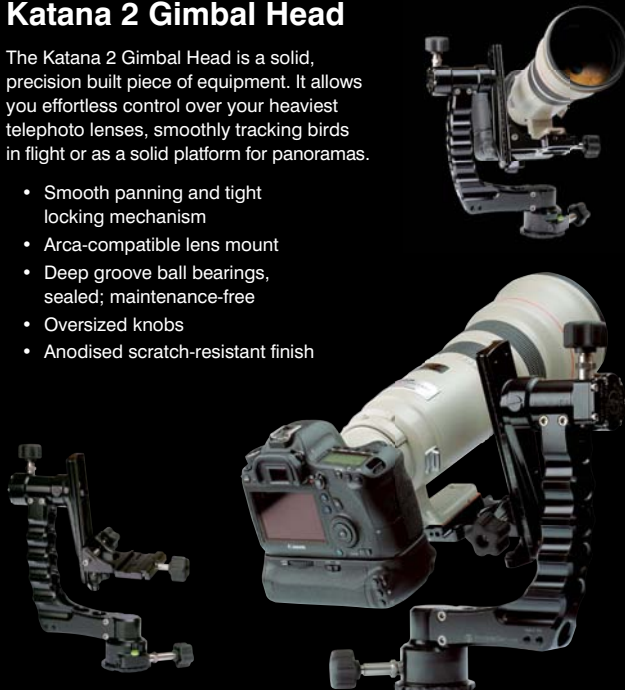
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The usual suspects

Always on the lookout for interesting urban wildlife photo projects, Tomos Brangwyn discovered one of the UK's greatest nature spectacles happening in a supermarket car park

With my chin pressed firmly to the ground, a flash in one hand and a fisheye lens in the other, this was one trip to the shops I was never going to forget. I was surrounded by a gang of mischievous iridescent starlings, whose lustrous feathers sparkled in the glow of the mid-morning winter sun.

It was a special moment, undeniably. Starling numbers have declined dramatically in recent years and finding a remaining stronghold is not easy. Getting up close, in the hope of creating a strikingly personal image, was even harder.

My father had told me stories of great murmurations taking place within sight of Buckingham Palace in the 1960s. A tale also persists of there once being enough birds to halt the movement of Big Ben when a large

group landed upon one of its hands in 1949. But sadly, times have changed and none of my visits to either places yielded anything more than small and isolated flocks.

Things became more promising when I was told of a supermarket car park where starlings arrive daily, tempted in from the countryside by the promise of crisps, sandwich leftovers and the odd piece of dropped fruit. They drink from puddles, pick through mud that has accumulated between the tread of car tyres and perch upon windscreen mirrors. It sounded just too good an opportunity to miss.

At 10am the following day, as if by clockwork, the first birds began to trickle in from the south. There were only a few starlings at first, but as the minutes went by, more and more gathered. The birds were hungry and were soon scurrying

about, scanning the ground for breakfast scraps. One found a discarded apple core and raucous bickering among the group quickly followed.

Not long after, danger loomed overhead. Silence fell and heads were tilted up towards the sky. They remained dead still and alert. A great whoosh could be heard as every bird, perhaps 200 at this point, ascended high into the sky. A peregrine was soaring high, barely within sight, and the starlings twisted and turned as one, evading the threat until it eventually passed.

As the starlings gradually returned to the ground, it was time for me to leave. I smiled all the way home, my spirits lifted by a wild encounter that many of us can enjoy within our towns and cities, for now at least. ■

On the wing

Putting his camera's ISO capabilities to good use, Steve Young captures some low light shots of the Bewick's swans that flock to Slimbridge's famous wetland reserve every winter

right **Bewick's swan in flight:** My favourite photo from the 'in the dark flight shot session'; considering it was taken at 1/320sec at ISO 1600, it is remarkably sharp.

Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) near Gloucester has changed a lot since my first trip way back in the 1980s, but what hasn't changed is that it is still a great place to visit, and probably the best site to photograph Bewick's swans.

Slimbridge is the original WWT reserve, set up by the late Sir Peter Scott in 1946 as a centre for science and conservation. It was also opened to the public, which was virtually unheard of in those days. From his artist's studio overlooking the lakes at Slimbridge, Scott presented the BBC's first live television wildlife programmes.

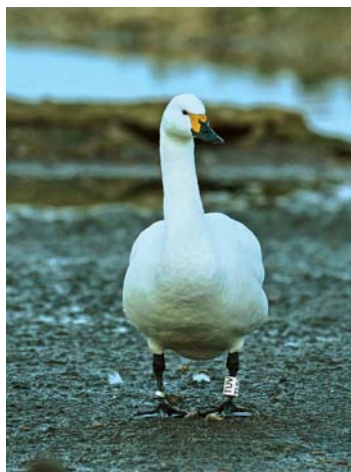
The Bewick's swans found at Slimbridge breed in arctic Russia and then migrate here for the winter. The first swans usually arrive back in the UK between mid and late October, with numbers eventually reaching around three hundred. Each individual's yellow bill pattern is different, so it is possible, with close views, to determine which birds return each year; some are also ringed to further help with tracking the birds to and from their breeding grounds.

Arriving mid-afternoon in winter wasn't ideal, but I was calling in on my way home, so I made the most of my visit. From one of the hides, I was treated to spectacular flocks of lapwing and golden plover wheeling around the flooded fields as a peregrine falcon swooped down among them. Moving along to a different

hide I was ready and waiting for the Bewick's swans to start flying in for their late-afternoon feed. The light was fading fast, however, and I knew I was going to be in a bit of trouble for my flight shots, as feeding time starts at 5pm.

Some of the swans were coming in earlier, however, and as they are not particularly fast fliers I had the chance of photographing them as family groups glided along. Typically, the best views came when it was almost dark, and with my ISO at 1600 I was only managing a shutter speed of 1/320sec.

I decided it was time to turn my attention to the birds that had already landed on the lake, and took a few standard portrait shots. Among them was a Bewick's swan with an identification leg ring; researching this later I found it had been ringed at Slimbridge in 2001 and had been coming back each year. It is also regularly seen in Germany in March, when it stops off to feed on the return journey to its breeding grounds in Russia; and there's me moaning about the drive home to Liverpool from Gloucester...



Bewick swan, ringed: This individual has spent nearly every winter at Slimbridge since 2001.



Feeding time: 5pm is feeding time at Slimbridge; the wild birds flock in to eat the seed provided for them.

Steve's March highlights



Bird of the month

Only a small number of snow buntings breed in the UK, on the tops of the Scottish Highlands. During winter, however, birds from Scandinavia migrate here and spend their time in small flocks along our shoreline.

Virtually anywhere can have the odd one or two birds, but some sites, such as Salthouse in Norfolk, have larger flocks; as I write this article, two snow buntings have just been found on Crosby shore just a few miles away from my house.

Snow buntings are a photographer's favourite, as they can be very confiding and are also good-looking birds – especially the males. Spend a bit of time with the ones that you find, watch what they do and work out the best places to wait for them. Try putting seed out; they will be searching the debris on the shoreline for food, or may climb grasses to find the seeds at the top.



top left Male snow buntings are brighter and whiter than the females.

top right If you spend time with snow buntings, you will probably have a chance to capture behaviour such as preening, bathing and wing-stretching, as shown here.

left Snow buntings are seed lovers, and will look for them in grasses and along the edge of the tide.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP

For many species, fruit can be a great food source in winter, when other foods such as nuts and seeds are not available, and it can be used as bait to attract birds closer for photographic opportunities.

During autumn, starlings and thrushes will flock to apple trees to eat what they can before the fruit is picked. Obviously fruit trees are bare during winter, but apples and pears can be bought cheaply and put out in gardens or on feeding stations – this can be a great way of

making a colourful and attractive picture while feeding the birds.

You can try putting lots of fruit out so there is a pile of it in the photo, or just use an individual apple and concentrate on a large image of the bird. Go low for an unusual angle or slightly higher to include more of the fruit.

Species such as blackbirds will tend to move small-sized fruit as they feed on it; for photo purposes, it is better to buy larger pears or apples that will stay in place for longer.



Blackbird: A mix of pears and apples is virtually guaranteed to bring blackbirds within range; place them close to a window or feeding station hide and see what happens.



Blue tit: A surprising variety of birds and animals like fruit, including wood pigeon, grey squirrel, blackbird, song and mistle thrush, starling, robin and, occasionally, blue tits.



Fieldfare: Sometimes, more unusual species can be attracted to fruit in harsh weather, such as this fieldfare which fed on apples during a two-week snowy period at my local reserve.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH

Carsington Water, Derbyshire



© Meme Schaefer/Shutterstock

Located between Ashbourne and Wirksworth, Carsington Water is a large reservoir close to the Peak District National Park. As well as being a major centre for leisure activities such as watersports and fishing, the reservoir is a haven for wildlife. Since it opened in 1992, over 30 mammal species and 215-plus bird species have been recorded. One of its star species is the great crested grebe. At this time of year, it is possible to see and, with luck, photograph pairs performing their famous 'weed dance' – one of the early signs of spring. Other interesting birds to look out for include kingfishers, tufted ducks, buzzards and lapwings.

Facilities Four viewing hides, restaurant, outdoor café and kiosks, shop, visitor centre, toilets.

Opening times The RSPB reserve at Carsington is open 10am to 6pm in summer and 10am to 5pm in winter.

Entry fee Main car park costs £2.50 for three hours or £4.70 for the whole day; Sheepwash car park costs £1 for two hours or £2.50 for the whole day; Millfields car park costs £2.50 per day.

Website rspb.org.uk/carsingtonwater



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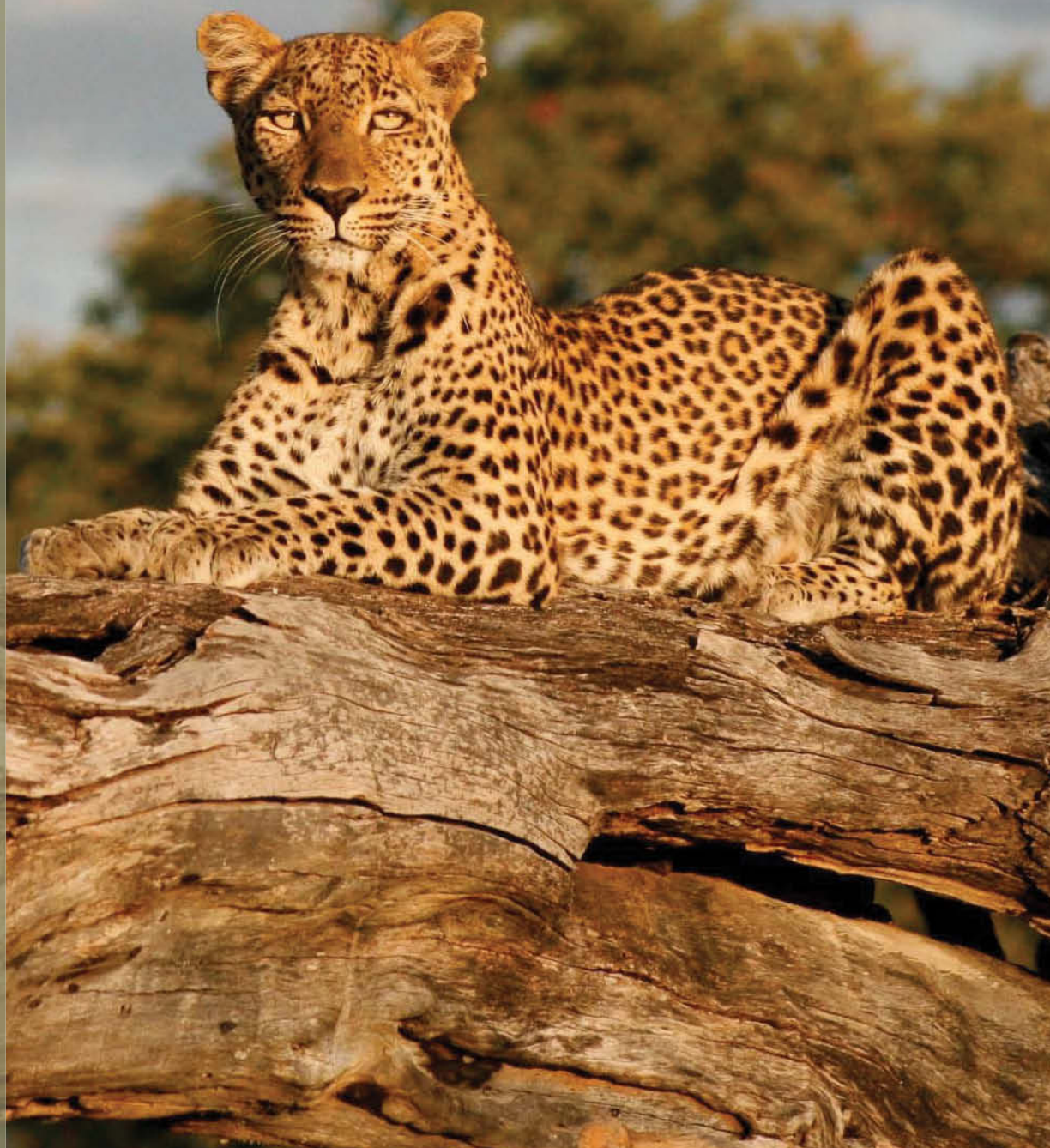
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– *Frans Lanting, National Geographic*

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– *Andy Rouse, star of Animal Planet’s The Wildlife Photographer*

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PHOTO SHOWCASE

EXPLORING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Pursuing his passion for island wildlife, Sam Rowley set off to explore the remote and famous Galapagos Islands. Although the islands have been well documented by photographers over the years, he managed to find a fresh view of some of the extraordinary creatures that live there

I've always had a soft spot for the natural history of the world's islands. Whether it's their residents' endearing tameness or bizarre characteristics that charm me most, I doubt I'll ever know for sure. Armed with this strange fascination, it was almost inevitable that I would, at some point, find myself heading for the Galapagos Islands. My moment finally arrived last summer, and I set out on a two-month adventure with the sole purpose of capturing the raw beauty and the pristine wilderness of the place.


Appropriately known as the 'enchanted islands', the

Galapagos archipelago is located in the heart of the Pacific Ocean, about 550 miles west of Ecuador. The islands are, of course, famous for their links with Charles Darwin and his studies of co-operative and diverse finches, but I set out to photograph the islands' other dwellers, some of which are less well known. Although I made several trips to other islands during my stay, I spent most time on the main island of Santa Cruz, where it's possible to see lumbering Galapagos tortoises and the dragon-esque marine iguana.

above In the heart of the mangrove forests of Isabela Island, a male fiddler crab displays its major claw as it tries to protect its burrow from intruders. Almost oblivious to the crab, a marine iguana idly waddles past with its tail dragging behind it.

>



A close-up photograph of a marine iguana's head and neck, positioned in the lower-left corner. The iguana's skin is dark and textured, with prominent spines along its back and neck. Its head is turned slightly, showing its eye and ear. The background is a deep, dark blue night sky filled with numerous bright, out-of-focus stars, creating a bokeh effect. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the iguana's skin and the brilliance of the stars.

As the sun sets, hordes of marine iguanas return from feeding on the shoreline to the upper beach, where they get ready to hunker down for the evening. As the temperature drops, they conserve body heat by sticking as close together as possible. This individual sneezed salt spray over a resting group while clambering over them in pursuit of its favourite resting spot.



top A small group of sea lions lounge at sunset on an idyllic beach on San Cristobal Island. The sea lions rarely seemed to ever do much else.

above (left) Action shots were certainly not at the forefront of my mind when photographing Galapagos tortoises, which weigh up to 250kg and have a maximum walking speed of 0.2mph. Therefore, I challenged myself to see if I could find any interesting angles or close-ups.

above (right) Found across the globe, short-eared owls will look familiar to some, yet this individual is a member of the distinct Galapagos subspecies. Waiting outside the entrance of a storm petrel nest, it seized an adult with its talons as it exited, before making its way to a crevice stained white with droppings. The storm petrel was swallowed whole; after the owl had gulped it down, it paused momentarily with the final feather still on view.

opposite page (top) Shortly after emerging from the surf on San Cristobal Island, this sea lion rolled around on the beach, causing sand to stick to every inch of its body.

opposite page (bottom) A red-footed booby perches on a tree branch before returning to its nest lower down. Genovesa Island is home to vast numbers of seabirds, including the red-footed booby's relatives: the blue-footed booby and the Nazca booby.



NEXT MONTH

OP190 ON SALE 12 MARCH 2015

Outdoor Photographer of the Year:
commended showcase and overall winner!

- + Make the most of natural light
- + The art of mindful photography
- + Tested: Panasonic DMC-LX100

The slings and arrows of outrageous laptop fortune

Having damaged his laptop to the point of it being beyond repair, Nick Smith learned the hard way that you must treat your computers with more respect, or be prepared to face some painful consequences...

I can still see it. And although it is probably one of the worst clichés available to any writer, the moment disaster struck happened in slow motion. I watched it happen frame by frame in such a way that I could see the inevitable outcome, but was powerless to prevent it. It was the death of a thousand cuts.

What had been a delicious glass of Malbec described an almost perfect arc through the air before landing with gruesome grace and precision on the keyboard of my MacBook Pro. As in all the movies, it wasn't just in slow motion: the soundtrack faded out to silence as the full horror of what had happened sank in.

You might think that there is nothing that could make this worse. The computer was of course beyond repair. Completely dead. In fact, it is scowling at me from my desk as I write this, broken and lifeless, a memento of an ill-advised editing session in a hotel room. That was what made it worse: sitting in Punta Arenas at the southernmost tip of the continent of South America, I was about as far away from home as it was possible to be. On the far side of the world I was alone with that strange feeling of Thanatos that only dysfunctional digital technology can produce. Something that had cost me a fiver had destroyed an object that had cost around a grand, but which was worth many orders of magnitude more.

If there is one thing that everyone in our profession knows it is that consumer electronics and liquids do not mix. We take enormously elaborate precautions to protect our cameras from the elements and we spend vast sums of the hard-earned making sure that the hostile world of water is kept at bay. The only defence I can mount – and it's pretty flimsy – is that I was so excited at the prospect of reviewing the shots I'd taken earlier that day in Antarctica, I thought there could be nothing wrong in combining a little business and pleasure. I had been on an unforgettable day trip to Union Glacier at almost 80° south, travelling in a Russian Ilyushin expedition supply plane. You can see why I may have been a tad over-excited.

Rewind to a few months ago when I was sitting in the Didcot office of Britain's most well-known and possibly most important neuroscientist. Baroness Susan Greenfield and I were discussing the detrimental effects of digital technology on the development of young minds. We were analysing in particular the shortening of the attention span that has occurred in the human species since we have become reliant on, and addicted to, objects such as smartphones, tablets, games consoles and laptops. As our

conversation ranged over different aspects of our existence in the digital realm, we started to realise that one of the most important threads we were addressing was the increasing reliance we place on digital machine storage capability as a kind of annexe to our minds. In other words, we outsource our memories, employing computer technology to do much of the brain's repetitious donkey work. The problem with this is that the storage objects we rely on are simply so vulnerable to mechanical damage. And don't get me started on how easy they are to lose, or the frequency with which they are routinely stolen.

As photographers, we think an awful lot about cameras, lenses and software. But we don't often pause to consider the laptops we rely on so heavily. Mine are subject to all kinds of abuse: chucked into the back of four-wheel drives, endlessly tossed about in airport security checks and generally treated with far less respect than my precious cameras. So it's hardly a surprise that from time to time we end up paying the price of this complacency. I was lucky that I had backed up the hard drive before leaving for Chile and so, stranded in Punta Arenas, all I had to do was be patient. Back in Blighty all wrongs would be righted, while yet another trip to Argos would put me in possession of yet another MacBook Pro.

Oddly enough, being patient introduced a new form of anxiety that's quite hard to describe. As I continued my photographic tour of southern Chile, I was shooting without any backup resources whatsoever. The only copies of what was in my camera were in the instrument itself. As a consequence, I developed a degree of paranoia about the whereabouts of my camera that, had it not been so woefully, pathetically serious, would have actually been reasonably funny.

Lady luck was on my side, however, because as I drank a glass of red wine in the Shackleton Bar (at some point I'm going to understand the relationship between red wine and technology disasters) I was introduced to an explorer who turned out to be a friend of a friend. No problem, quoth he, let's load up your pictures on to my Mac and I'll email them to you via a file-sharing protocol. Such generosity of spirit was a wonder to behold, and my problems were temporarily solved.

If there is a moral to my tale other than the photographic equivalent of 'don't drink and drive' it is this: there is nothing funny about spilling liquid over your computers. Take my tale seriously and learn from my mistake. ■



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YOUR CHANCE TO TAKE PART

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VIEWPOINT OF THE MONTH

Your location pictures and words could earn you £200! Send us up to 10 of your best digital images or slides from your favourite UK & Irish viewpoints. If selected, we will commission you to write up your location!

VIEWPOINTS

Your photos of your favourite locations could earn you £50! Send us up to 10 of your best digital images or slides, and, if one is selected, you will earn £50.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Take on our monthly photo challenge – this month we're asking you to enter your best adventure images (see page 111) – as well as having your photo published in the July 2015 issue of *OP*, you could win a Smartwool baselayer, worth £85!

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Tell us the name of the location featured on page 112 and this month you could win an Aclima WoolNet baselayer and two Nikwax cleaning products worth over £50.

READER GALLERY

Send us your very best outdoor images, and if you're chosen as our winner you will win a Lowepro Photo Sport 200 AW camera bag, worth £149. It's designed especially for photographers who like to travel light, but require the best possible protection for their gear.

YOUR LETTERS

We'd love to hear from you! Send your views, opinions and musings to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com or send them in by post. Please note that letters may be edited.

OP READER DAYS

Register your interest for our soon to be announced *OP* Reader Days, and you could be joining us and some of our professional contributors at one of a number of great UK locations. Please send your full contact details, including your name, address and phone number to anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com, or use our postal submission form.

WRITE FOR US!

We are always on the lookout for inspiring new features. If you have a great idea for an article then please send a short outline (no more than 60 words), plus five accompanying low-res images for our consideration.

Outdoor Photography

I would like to take part in the following section(s): please tick ☒

VIEWPOINTS ☐

My images were all taken in the month of _____

The name of my location _____

(We are currently looking for images taken in June, July and August)

READER GALLERY ☐

ONE THING THIS MONTH... ☐

ADVENTURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Please supply captions and full technical details for each image.

LETTERS ☐

WHERE IN THE WORLD? ☐

OP READER DAYS ☐

(I have included my full contact details, including daytime telephone number)

GENERAL SUBMISSION ☐

I have included a SAE and would like my work returned ☐

IMPORTANT! Please include your full contact details with your submission, including a daytime telephone number

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime telephone number _____

Email _____

Website _____

POST YOUR SUBMISSION TO
Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street,
Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN

Photocopies of this form are acceptable

DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS

When burning your CD, create two folders: one containing TIFF or JPEG - saved at quality 10 or above - files, saved at 300dpi, RGB or CMYK, and MAC compatible; and a second folder with low-res 72dpi JPEG files. Only send 8-bit files (not 16-bit files) and flatten any layers. Add your own name to the image filenames. Please write your name and contact details on your CD, or include this information in a text file on the CD. Finally, if you can, print off a contact sheet of thumbnails of the images included on the CD; this is very useful for us.

YOUR SUBMISSION - CHECKLIST

- 1 Send both low-res and high-res versions of your images
- 2 Add your own name to your image filenames
- 3 Write your name and contact details on your CD

EMAIL ENTRIES

We are unable to accept speculative submissions via email, so please do not send work in this way, unless requested to do so by a member of the *OP* editorial team.

WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS

You can send us links to your website, for us to view your general work only. Please note that strictly no correspondence will be entered into regarding website submissions. Send the link to opweb@thegmcgroup.com.

RETURN OF YOUR WORK

Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

SEND POSTAL SUBMISSIONS TO:
Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes,
East Sussex, BN7 1XN



Visionary

Tripods and support

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VT RANGE

- 3-way panhead
- Quick release system
- Separate tilt and pan locks
- Bubble level
- Elevator crank and locks

- Grip handle VT30/50/70
- 3 section aluminum closed channel legs 4 section on VT6
- Side leg locks

- Brace with lock
- Hook on center column VT30/50/70
- Case included



VT 6

Net weight: 705g
Max operation height: 1290mm
Min operation height: 415mm
Retracted length: 450mm
Leg Diameter: 20mm

VT 30

Net weight: 1220g
Max operation height: 1530mm
Min operation height: 590mm
Retracted length: 600mm
Leg Diameter: 20mm

VT 50

Net weight: 1500g
Max operation height: 1600mm
Min operation height: 620mm
Retracted length: 640mm
Leg Diameter: 23.2mm

VT 70

Net weight: 1740g
Max operation height: 1660mm
Min operation height: 645mm
Retracted length: 660mm
Leg Diameter: 26.7mm



MONOPODS

VM 3



- Folded length 480mm
- Max length 1465mm
- 4 section
- Weight 275g
- Load capability 1.2kg
- 3 way head
- Quick release
- Spirit level
- Case included

VM 5

Completing the line-up, our Visionary M-5 is a full specification monopod.

- Max operating height: 1800mm
- Folded height: 640mm
- Max load capacity: 3KG
- Section: 4
- Tube diameter: 26.8mm
- Net weight: 600g



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The T-830 remains our standard full spec medium weight tripod for telescopes.

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- 33mm leg
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- Retracted length 65cm,
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All models and offers are subject to availability. Prices and specifications are subject to change without notice. E&O.E. Your statutory rights are not affected.

GEAR ZONE

ACQUIRE

90 **Gearing up**

92 **Camera test**



THE NEW KING OF COMPACTS?

Andy Luck finds out if the Sony RX100 III is the perfect pocket camera



Sony FDR-X1000V 4K Action Cam with Wi-Fi & GPS ▲

Sony's FDR-X1000V is a strong contender in the action camera market. With remarkable 4K picture quality, an Exmor R CMOS sensor, a BIONZ X processor and a 170° ultra wideangle Zeiss Tessar lens, all your adventures will be captured in high-quality detail. It can record Full HD 120p footage, is fully waterproof up to 10 metres and has a built-in SteadyShot feature that's more effective than ever.

Guide price £359
sony.co.uk

Hanwag Nazcat GTX ▼

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Guide price £180
hanwag.com



GEARING UP

SmartWool PhD Spring Gloves ▼

Featuring a lightweight Merino lining for moisture management and temperature control, SmartWool's PhD Spring Gloves offer multi-seasonal versatility. Made from TouchTec leather, they are touchscreen compatible, plus they have a suede thumb panel that doubles up as a nose wipe.

Guide price £64.99
smartwool.com



Seagate Seven Portable Drive ▼

Currently the world's slimmest external hard drive to carry 500GB of data, the Seagate Seven is just 7mm thick. Made entirely of steel and with simplicity at the core of its design, this impressive device is robust as well as extremely portable. The drive has a USB 3.0 port and weighs just 150 grams.

Guide price £89.99
seagate.com



Nikon AF-S DX 55-200mm f/4-5.6G ED VR II ▼

If you're a DX-format camera user in need of a portable and lightweight telephoto lens, Nikon's latest 55-200mm lens might just be for you. A great way to discover the creative advantages of shooting telephoto, this collapsible lens is perfect for photographing distant wildlife, as well as travel and sporting adventures. It has built-in vibration reduction technology, extra-low dispersion glass elements and a silent wave motor, which means you can shoot high-quality images discreetly. Weighing 300g and measuring just 83mm in length when retracted, it's ideal for fitting into a small camera bag.

Guide price £279
nikon.com



Mindshift Gear House of Cards ▼

Storing up to six CF cards and three SD cards, Mindshift Gear's House of Cards wallet will keep memory cards safe and accessible when you're out in the field. Made from waterproof material, it has a removable tether clip that attaches to a belt, bag or clothing.

Guide price £18.50
snapperstuff.co.uk



EnerPlex Surfr iPhone 5/5s case ▼

EnerPlex's rugged solar charging and portable power products are made from shock-resistant and lightweight plastic, making them great for using outdoors. Compatible with the iPhone 5 and 5s, EnerPlex's Surfr case weighs only 89 grams and is 16mm thick. The case, which comes in a range of eye-catching colours, features a 2000mAh battery pack that will more than double the life of your phone.

Guide price £59.99
Available in the UK from amazon.co.uk



Pentax DA 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6mm HD ED ▼

Developed in response to requests from Pentax devotees, this zoom lens brings a 35mm equivalent focal length of 24.5-130mm to Pentax's K-mount DSLRs. Ideal for wildlife photographers, the lens includes one extra-low dispersion element and three high-grade aspherical elements to minimise spherical and chromatic aberrations. It also has Pentax's Quick-Shift Focus System and is extremely weather resistant.

Guide price £599.99
ricoh-imaging.co.uk



Sprayway Nesus 1/2 Zip ▼

With 40 years' experience designing and producing functional outdoor clothing, Sprayway's latest garment matches up to everything you might expect from this high-quality brand. Made from Merino wool, the Nesus 1/2 Zip provides maximum breathability and temperature control. With cover-stitched seams and no uncomfortable back-neck labels, this is the perfect baselayer for your outdoor adventures.

Guide price £50
sprayway.com



Salomon Quest Origins Boot ▼

Combining full-grain leather with excellent stability, Salomon's latest hiking boot is suitable for almost any adventure. Using the brand's cutting-edge technology from their trail running range, the 4D Chassis construction gives superior stability on a variety of terrains. Combine this with the other features, including its Contagrip outsole, protective rubber toe and heel caps and Gore-Tex lining throughout, and you've got a serious pair of boots on your feet.

Guide price £170
Available in the UK from cotswoldoutdoor.com



Sony RX100 III

Sony's latest ultra compact camera, the RX100 III, boasts a raft of useful features, including an ingenious pop-up electronic viewfinder.

Andy Luck puts it to the test

Guide price £699

Contact sony.co.uk

below I was able to handhold the camera for this after-dark seascape, lit by nothing more than moonlight, thanks to the fast lens, high ISO, and image stabilisation. *Sony DSC-RX100 III with 8.8-25.7mm f/1.8-2.8 lens, ISO 800, 1/15sec at f/1.8, handheld*

They say the best camera is the one you have with you. It's an old adage but a true one. After all, it's no good leaving your DSLR and 24-70mm lens at home because they're too heavy and bulky and then wishing you had them with you.

Many cameras promise to offer a pocketable alternative; the one you'll always have with you. The vital statistics of compact cameras may look fine, but it's not until you have one in hand that you find out whether it really is small enough to take along every time. Moreover, will the image quality make it a genuine substitute for a bigger camera?

This is exactly the niche market Sony's RX100 compact camera series is designed to appeal to. The original version ticked



many of those boxes and, thanks to its tiny size and high image quality, it became EISA's European Advanced Compact Camera for 2012-2013.

It was expensive, but what a gem of a camera, with its miniaturised, metal Leica-esque shape and a Carl Zeiss T* zoom lens. It also had the most vital of statistics; a larger, one-inch, sensor combined with a tiny body depth of just 36mm; the almost flush-fitting lens meant it would fit even in a jeans pocket.

Not content to let things rest, Sony added a useful tilt screen to the RX100 II in June 2013, along with a multi-interface shoe and higher ISO sensitivity, while

only increasing the depth by a couple of millimetres. These were all good additions, but probably not enough to justify an upgrade for owners of the original RX100.

Now, a year later, we have the RX100 III, which may well be the nadir of the RX series with its Bionz X processor. With the latest incarnation we have a 3in WhiteMagic 180° tilting LCD screen (perfect for selfie addicts!), while the depth of the camera has only increased by a couple of millimetres; it is still very svelte and pocketable at 41mm deep. In return, we have a whole host of useful and ingenious features.

For a start, the Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* lens has gone from a 28-100mm f/1.8-4.9 to a wider and shorter but much brighter 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 lens. This lens is a really good performer, with two bonded aspherical elements, and it focuses much closer than the previous lens and is sharper.

Then we have a marvellously engineered pop-up, pop-out SVGA 1.44M-dot electronic viewfinder. Incredibly, this fits in the space where the flash used to reside, (the flash now moves cleverly to the middle of the top plate). I can't stress enough just how cool this is in such a tiny camera, and full kudos to Sony for adding something so many of us have asked for. The viewfinder makes a massive difference not just to composition in bright light, where LCD screens are generally useless, but also in low light. It is now possible to brace the camera to the face in the traditional way, facilitating much slower shutter speeds.

Video was always a good feature of the RX series, and it now includes full sensor





The inbuilt ND filter allows much slower shutter speeds, making it possible to add movement to subjects such as water.

Sony DSC-RX100 III with 8.8-25.7mm f/1.8-2.8 lens, ISO 200, 0.4sec at f/2.8, handheld



For such a tiny camera, the tilt screen is a very welcome addition that helps with composition from a low angle.

Sony DSC-RX100 III with 8.8-25.7mm f/1.8-2.8 lens, ISO 200, 1/400sec at f/3.5, handheld

TECH SPEC

Sensor 20.1MP 1in Exmor R CMOS sensor

Maximum resolution 5472x3648

Lens 24-70 f/1.8-2.8 Carl Zeiss Vario Sonnar T*

Zoom Optical zoom 2.9x, digital zoom up to 44x (VGA)

Processor Bionz X

Shutter speed 30-1/2000sec

ISO sensitivity 125-12800

Focus mode Single-shot AF, Continuous AF, DMF, Manual Focus

Viewfinder Pop-up electronic viewfinder

LCD 3in 1,440,000-dot tiltable 180°

Filtration Built-in 3-stop ND filter

Flash Pop-up

HD movie mode 1080p XAVC S 50Mbps

Connections

Micro-USB,

micro-HDMI (Type D)

Power NP-BX1 li-ion battery

Size 102x58x41mm

Weight 290g

readout in XAVC S format at 50Mbps. Again, this is incredible; broadcast quality in a pocket camera – it's unheard of! In addition, clean HDMI out and zebras have been added, increasing the professional appeal.

To make the most of the fast lens, in both stills and video mode, a three-stop ND filter has been included. This is something even the much-vaunted Panasonic GH4, current king of the video, does not have! In video mode it allows the slow reciprocal shutter speeds needed for natural-looking motion without having to

LIKES

- ✓ Beautiful design and build
- ✓ Ingenious electronic viewfinder
- ✓ Fantastic image quality
- ✓ Excellent video
- ✓ Built-in ND filter

DISLIKES

- ✗ Closing electronic viewfinder switches camera off
- ✗ Wall charger should be included
- ✗ Would like a portrait length to the lens

use excessively small apertures. In stills mode, it enables wider apertures to be used for depth of field effects, and slower shutter speeds can be used.

Other standout features, such as the lens ring control, focus peaking and sweep panorama mode are continued from the previous models. Wi-Fi with NFC and downloadable apps are carried over from the RX100 II.

Battery life, at around 320 shots, has gone down slightly and suffers more if the electronic viewfinder is used. This is not too bad for such a tiny camera, though. Without an optional wall charger, however, the battery can only be charged in the camera, which may not suit everyone.

Performance, however, is very good for a compact camera, with quick startup and responsive focus and shutter. In speed priority mode, 10fps is possible, although this requires focus and exposure to be locked on the first frame of a burst.

The camera can be switched on by popping up the electronic viewfinder. Unfortunately, however, this also switches the camera off when you fold it away, which you may not want. Annoyingly, there is no option available to override this. ■



VERDICT

For such a tiny camera to have 20 million pixels of very high fidelity resolution is really quite special, especially when matched to such a superb Carl Zeiss lens. Shoehorning in that amazing pop-up electronic viewfinder and a three-stop ND filter is pure genius, and confirms that the Sony RX100 III is one of the most creative pocket cameras to date.

RATINGS

Handling	95%
Performance	97%
Specification	96%
Value	90%

OVERALL
94.5%



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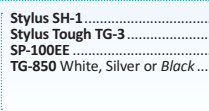
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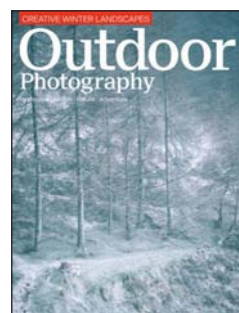
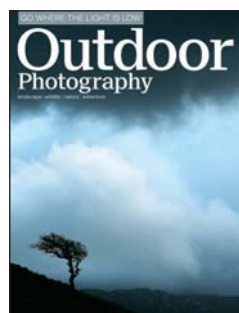
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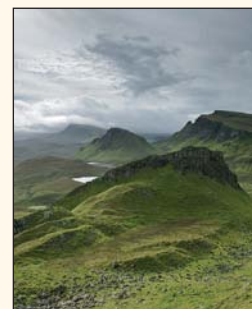
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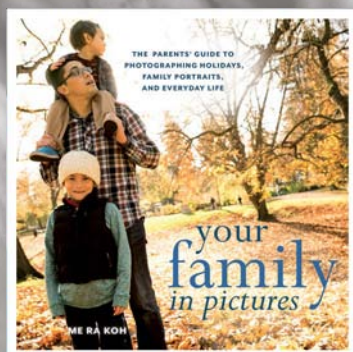
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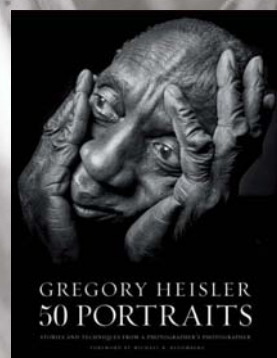
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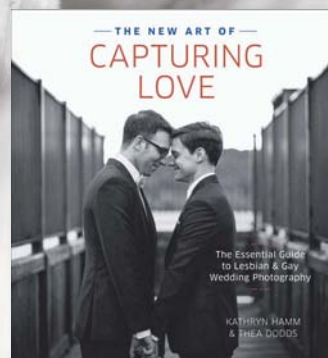
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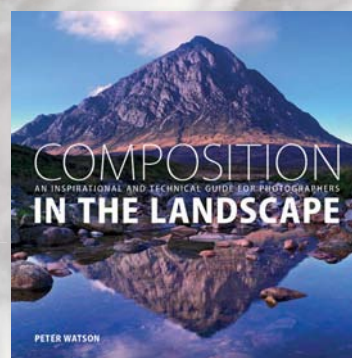
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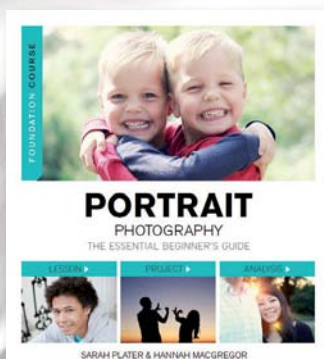
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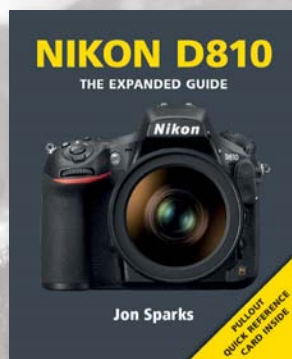
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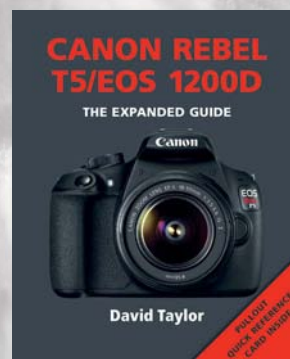
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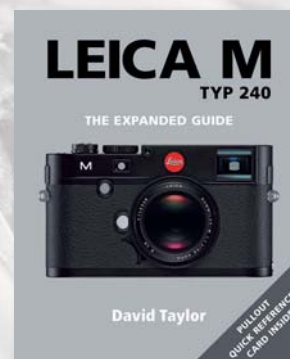
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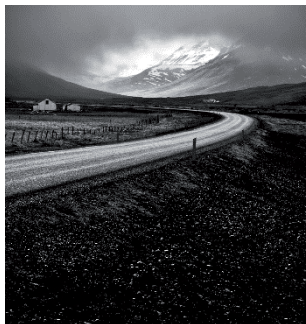
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Ian Good Yorkshire Dales April 2014

2015 WORKSHOPS

FEBRUARY 2015

Peak District (1 place) • 12-15th • 3 Nights Dinner, B&B • £645.00

Iceland Aurora Tour (FULL) • 20th-27th

MARCH 2015

Iceland March Aurora Tour (FULL) • March 6th - 11th • 5 Nights Dinner, B&B inc Flights • £1,595.00

Lake District Winter Masterclass (1 Place) • 20th - 23rd • 3 Nights Dinner, B&B • £595.00

Isle of Skye (FULL) • March 24th-28th • 4 nights Dinner, B&B • £745.00

APRIL 2015

Northumberland (FULL) • 13th - 16th • 3 Nights Dinner, B&B • £545.00

Yorkshire Coast and Dales (1 Place) • 24th - 27th • 3 Nights Dinner, B&B • £595.00

MAY 2015

Lake District Fells and Spring Bluebells (1 Place) • 8th - 10th • 2 Nights Dinner, B&B • £445.00

JUNE 2015

ICELAND

10 Day Summer Tour (1 Place) • 19th - 29th • Includes Dinner, B&B Flights from Manchester • £2,995.00

JULY 2015

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Street Photography and Architecture (1 Place Max 5) • 4th - 8th • 4 Nights Dinner, B&B inc Flights • £1,495.00

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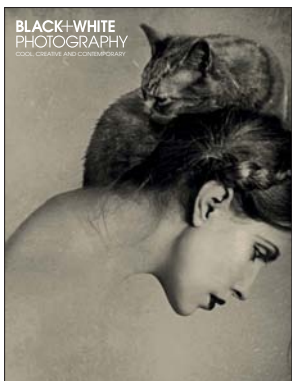


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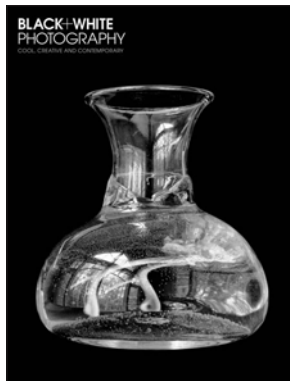
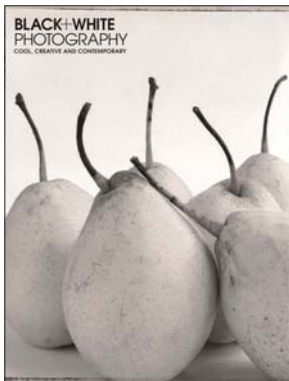
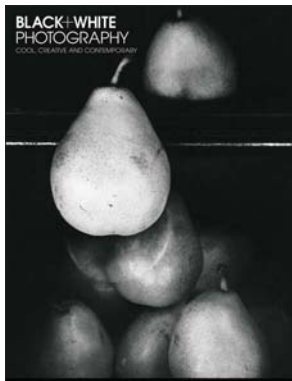
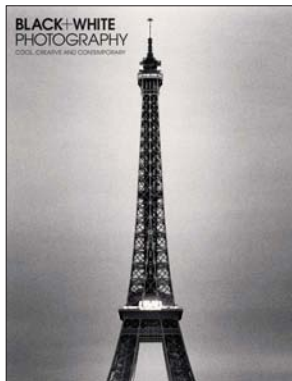
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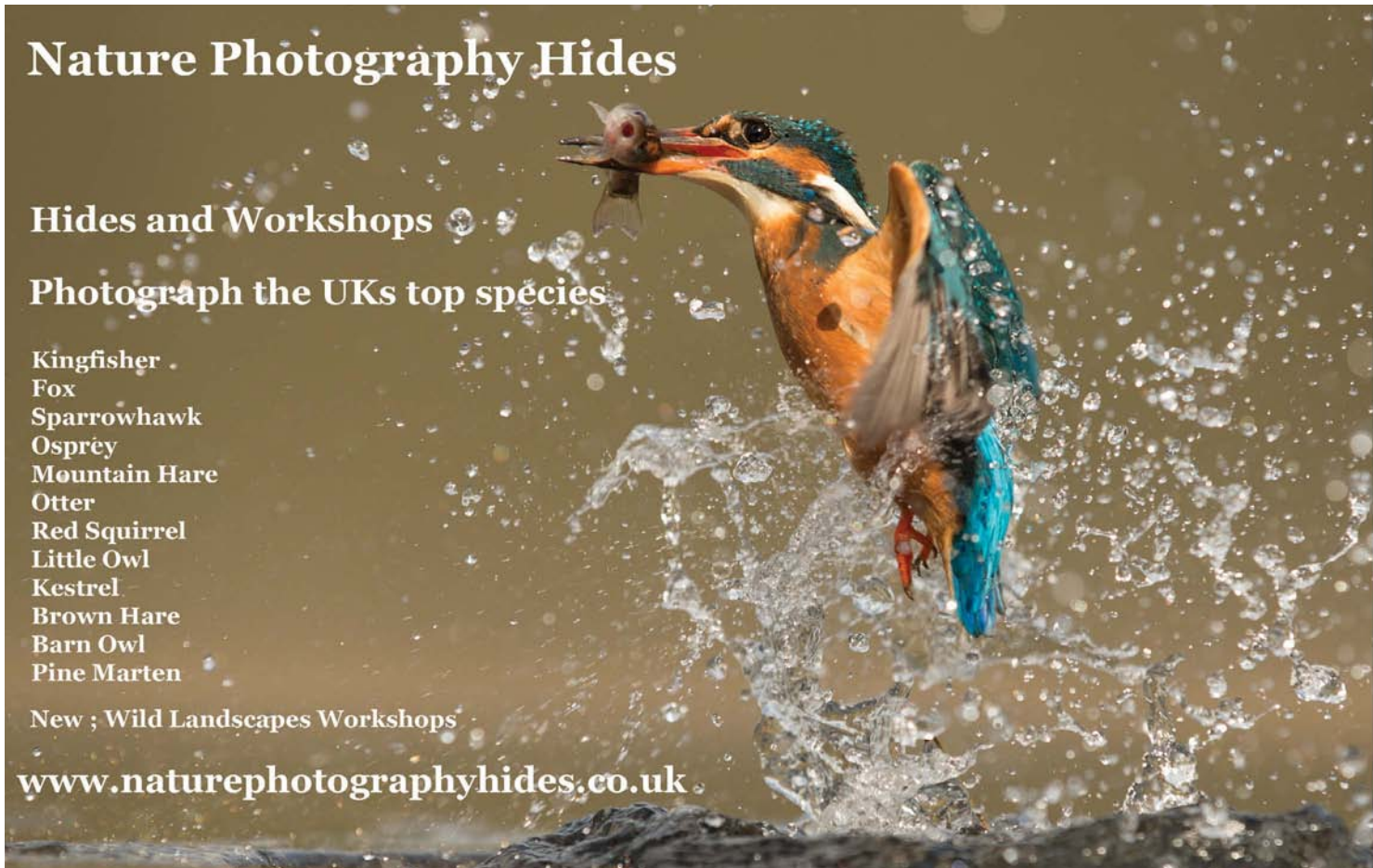
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Golden Eagle Experience in Leicestershire 2015 Dates £99

April 19th, May 17th; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in carefully chosen natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Also selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

Cheetahs, Lions, Foxes, Birds of Prey, Cambs. £109

April 18th, June 28th; Privileged access to Cheetahs, Bengal Tiger, White Tiger & Corsac Foxes. The Cheetah & Tiger enclosures are not mowed for enhanced photographic opportunities. Private Displays by various Birds of Prey, both static & flying. Jesses hidden for static shots. New Cheetah Cubs for 2015

Amazing Bat Photos & Learn Fill-in Flash Techniques £129

April 15th, 17th; Oxfordshire. We will concentrate on the Bats first. Take amazing bat photos. Practice fill-in flash on many other wildlife subjects in different lighting conditions. Max 4 persons. We are most happy to lend you a Canon digital camera and flash unit for the day. Indoor exhibits make weather conditions irrelevant.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent £149

March 21st, 28th. April 11th, May 9th; Up close to African Lions, Bengal + Siberian + Sumatran Tigers, Serval, Cheetah, Pumas, Jungle Cat, Amur & Snow Leopards, Black Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Fishing Cat. Large open enclosures. UK's most popular photo workshop. Really special photo opportunities from just inches away. Two sets of Lion Cubs born July & August 2013. Huge natural enclosure. Max 12 clients.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent

- Specialist event for just 6 photographers - includes Jaguar £199

April 8th, 9th, 10th; Full day as above, but with additional space at each enclosure. Time is also put aside to review your photos at lunchtime. One to one tuition throughout this very special day. You will see all the animals as above and you will have more personal interaction with the cats. Now including Jaguar.

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Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne £149

March 22nd, May 3, 10, 31st; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean back-grounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, Deer.

Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £99

April 25th, 26th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding wooded locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).

Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £139

July 6th, 7th, 8th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. This is possibly Englands longest established photographic venue. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. Time is spent inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters & Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through for any subject today.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £99

April 22, 23rd; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat. As featured on recent series of TV programs on Animal Planet. Small groups. Tuition

Bass Rock Gannets £185

June 5, 7, 11, 21st; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.

Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99

June 19th; Fantastic new workshop for 2014. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography) £89

June 6th, 10th, 17th, 20th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot, Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

June 13th, 14th; Amazing photography opportunities. Hill top views overlooking large extensive valleys and seascapes. Rocks and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle Owl and Barn Owl will be placed in really natural situations. Jesses will be hidden where possible for those perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne as this location is very close to the Farne Islands.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2), Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

June 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th; New venue. Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.

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EXPLORER-130P SynScan™ AZ GoTo 130MM (5.1") F/650 COMPUTERISED

PARABOLIC NEWTONIAN REFLECTOR (left) Fantastic performance from this highly capable all-rounder. Its precision Parabolic primary mirror captures 30% more precious starlight than a 114mm reflector for bright, sharp, contrasty views of a wide range of night sky objects. Supplied with 10mm & 25mm Eyepieces and 6x30 Finderscope

"Its sharp optics ensure that it delivers bright, diffraction-limited images... In short a great all-rounder in its class" Ade Ashford, www.scopetest.com

SKYMAX-127 SynScan™ AZ GoTo 127MM (5") F/1500 COMPUTERISED

MAKSUTOV-CASSEGRAIN (right) A larger version of the Skymax-102 providing a massive 55% more light-gathering power and packing an even more powerful punch than its smaller cousin for medium-to-high-power work. Supplied with 10mm & 25mm Eyepieces, 90° Star Diagonal and 6x30 Finderscope.

"This is one of the jewels in the Sky-Watcher crown. Its large enough to produce richly detailed, high-contrast, Lunar & Planetary images" Ade Ashford, www.scopetest.com

"The new SynScan AZ GoTo offers the key features, upgradeable feature set and ease of use of Sky-Watcher's more expensive equatorial GoTo mounts, in a sturdy, single-arm fork package weighing less than 4.5Kg (incl. Tripod) that has impressive targeting accuracy. Quieter in operation than the competing Celestron SLT and equally capable of external computer control, the SynScan AZ is ideally suited to sub-5Kg grab-and-go instruments with a standard Sky-Watcher/Vixen dovetail bar fitting. Highly Recommended!!" Astronomy Now Magazine

STARTRAVEL-102 SynScan™ AZ GoTo 102MM (4") F/500

COMPUTERISED REFRACTOR (below) Ideal multi-coated instrument for the wide-field observation of Deep-Sky objects, such as Nebulae, Star Fields & Clusters and galaxies. A useful telescope for astrophotography and also for daytime terrestrial use. Supplied with 10mm & 20mm Eyepieces, 45° Erect Image Diagonal and 6x30 Finder

"A compact and versatile photo-visual refractor equally at home delivering widefield deep-sky views or exploring terrestrial vistas." Ade Ashford, www.scopetest.com

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SKYHAWK-1145P SynScan™

AZ GoTo 114MM (4.5") F/500

COMPUTERISED PARABOLIC NEWTONIAN REFLECTOR (left) This telescope with its superb parabolic optics provides excellent all-round performance for both the observation of the Moon & Planets and Deep-Sky objects. Supplied with 10mm & 25mm Eyepieces and 6x24 Finderscope.

"The optics were so good... Captures star clusters and brighter nebulae beautifully under dark skies." BBC Sky At Night Magazine

Prod.Code: 10207

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£349



SKYMAX-102 SynScan™ AZ GoTo

102MM (4") F/1300 COMPUTERISED

MAKSUTOV-CASSEGRAIN (right) This compact telescope, with its high-resolution multi-coated optical system, excels at medium-to-high-powers for the examination of the surface detail of the Moon, planets and also for double-star observations. Also useful for terrestrial use. Supplied with 10mm & 25mm Eyepieces, 90° Star Diagonal and 6x30 Finderscope

"Delivers high-contrast, pin-sharp views one has become accustomed to with Sky-Watcher Maksutovs." Astronomy Now Magazine

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"I have used a great number of telescopes; some are good, some mediocre and some bad. To me the Sky-Watcher range of instruments are very good indeed, & suited to amateurs of all kinds - and they are not priced out of the market! Excellent value. Use them and enjoy them." Sir Patrick Moore CBE FRS (1923-2012)

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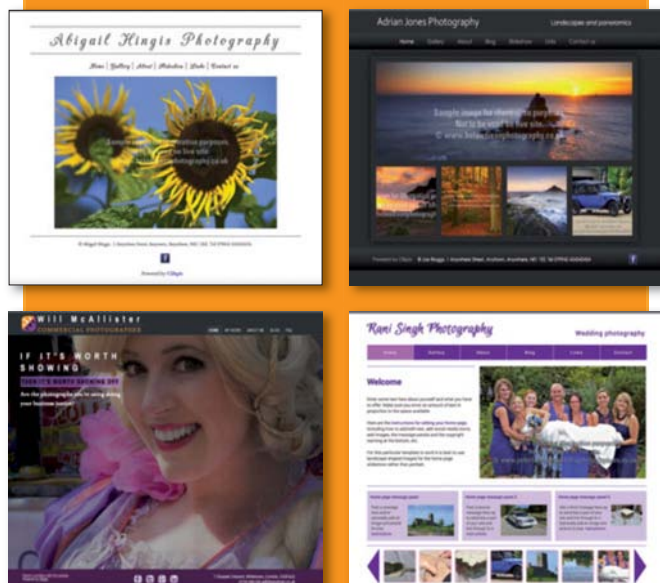
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CLASSIFIEDS

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Black & white landscapes

In our November 2014 issue, we invited you to send us your best black & white landscape images, and we were extremely impressed by the high standard of entries. Here's the winner of the Aquapac Toccoa daysack and our eight runners-up

WINNER (opposite page)

Paul Christener

My wife and I were on an easy rock climb under Kanderfirn, a glacier near Kandersteg, Switzerland. I had a picture in my mind and had tried to shoot it several times before. But this morning was different. It was the first day after a rainy period, so the waterfall was in full flow. The clouds fought their last fight against the sun, and the surrounding mountaintops were covered with freshly fallen snow. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 10sec at f/16, 6-stop grey filter, Gitzo Mountaineer tripod christener.ch

1/ Andy Teasdale

While climbing Mont Blanc in the Alps early last summer, I arrived on the Aiguille du Goûter an hour or so after sunrise. It is a beautiful place. The rays of sunlight shining through the Chamonix Aiguilles added a little extra to the view and gave a lovely reward for the early start we needed to be there. Nikon D800 with Nikon 28-200mm lens at 28mm, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/16, handheld andyteasdalemountainphotography.co.uk

2/ Rachael Talibart

This was taken at Fistril Beach in Newquay. It is a blend of two exposures: one minute to smooth the surf and create space, and a faster one for the yacht. I wanted to capture a sense of the tiny yacht being dwarfed by nature.







4



5



6

A high-contrast black & white conversion seemed to add the drama I sought.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 16-35mm f/2.8 L lens at 35mm, ISO 50, 64sec at f/11, polariser, Lee Big Stopper, 6-stop ND grad (hard), tripod
rachaeltalibart.com

3/ Shaun Walby

Loughrigg Fell, Lake District. The key element for this shot was the fantastic weather on the fell at the time. It was a cold February day; dark clouds billowed around the summits, bringing snow, sleet and rain, combined with intermittent

low winter sunlight. As I descended with my friend towards Ambleside, I spotted this lone tree. It was beautifully illuminated and stood apart from the bleak winter landscape and the Fairfield Horseshoe beyond.

Fuji X-E1 with Fuji XF 18-55mm lens at 28mm, ISO 400, 1/125sec at f/16, handheld
shaunwalbyphotography.com

4/ Mike Alexander

This ancient pilgrimage church, a medieval sailors' chapel of ease, nestles on the very edge of the sea cliffs at Mwnt in south Ceredigion,

Wales. I have taken so many photographs of Mwnt, with little success, but on this occasion the dark, brooding, stormy day somehow highlighted the deep spiritual nature of the church (Eglwys y Grog).

Nikon D800 with Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8 lens at 24mm, ISO 250, 1/500sec at f/9, polariser, tripod
welshscape.net

5/ David Shawe

Vik church, southern Iceland. Like most churches in Iceland, this one is situated on a hillside outside the village it serves.



Vik church is surrounded by hills on three sides, so it can be a good subject at any time of day. This image was captured shortly after sunrise, with the low sun, to the right of the image, bringing out the texture of the background hills and adding definition. The naturally high contrast and the muted colours of the scene make the monochrome version of the image a much stronger composition.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon EF 70-200mm f/4L IS lens and 1.4x converter at 280mm, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/8, tripod
davidshawephoto.com

6/ Stuart Scott

Late afternoon cloud and storms over the Ligurian Alps and foothills, Italy, captured through a window on a BA Airbus as it made its ascent from Turin airport.

Canon Powershot G1X with 15.1-60.4mm lens at 52.2mm, ISO 100, 1/100sec at f/10

7/ Martin Stephenson

This photograph of Myvatn lake was taken during my second trip to Iceland, in April last year. It was cold, with deep snow and strong winds. This small tree made a fantastic subject, with the huge Hverfjall volcano as

a backdrop and the smaller trees beyond.

Nikon D300 with AF-S Nikkor 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 VR lens at 48mm, ISO 250, 1/400sec at f/11, tripod, converted to B&W using Silver Efex Pro 2

8/ David Turnbull

I was at Portland Bill, Dorset, for sunset and to photograph Pulpit Rock, when I noticed this striking triangular cloud formation. I adjusted my position until I got this composition of the cloud so that it appeared to stem from the lighthouse.

Nikon D90 with Nikkor 18-105mm VR lens at 18mm, ISO 100, 1/40sec at f/11, Manfrotto tripod
flickr.com/photos/djturnbull

YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

Adventure photography

This month we're inviting you to send us your very best images that capture the spirit of adventure – whether it's hiking in the mountains, riding the first wave of the day or navigating a hairy mountain bike trail. Our adventures take us to some of the world's most extreme and spectacular landscapes, so there are some awe-inspiring photographs to be had; the challenge lies in trying to shoot the action just at the right moment. For advice on how to get awesome adventure shots, check out Alex Buisse's technique guide on page 28, then get out there and shoot – we can't wait to see what you come back with!

Enter and you could win a superb Smartwool NTS Mid 250 Zip T baselayer, worth £85!

The winner of the adventure photography challenge will not only have their winning image published, along with our selection of runners-up, in the July 2015 issue of *OP*, but will also receive a Smartwool NTS Mid 250 Zip T baselayer.

Made entirely from breathable merino wool, the bestselling NTS Mid 250 is Smartwool's warmest baselayer. Designed to provide superior performance in cold weather, it features flatlock seam construction to help eliminate chafing and back panels to provide more comfort when carrying a pack. There is a men's and a women's version and it is available in a variety of colours. To find out more go to smartwool.com.

Closing date for entries is 10 April 2015.

See page 87 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.





Jens Ottosen/Shutterstock

Where in the world?

If you can tell us the name of this stunning ancient fortress, you could win an Aclima WoolNet baselayer and two great Nikwax products, worth over £50!

Where is it?

The image shows an incredible fortress that was built in the early 11th century and lies 855 metres above sea level. But is it:

- a) **Hohenzollern Castle, Germany**
- b) **Pena National Palace, Portugal**
- c) **Scaligero Castle, Italy**

The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP192 (on sale 7 May). Send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'Fortress' as the subject, or drop it in the post to: Where in the world - 'Fortress', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN.

Deadline for entry is midnight on 30 March 2015.

THIS MONTH'S SUPERB PRIZE

An Aclima baselayer and two Nikwax cleaning products

This month's winner can choose from two superb Aclima baselayers: a men's WoolNet T-shirt, worth £52.95, or a women's WoolNet Tank Top, worth £47.95. These close-fitting sports tops offer the best combination of ventilation and insulation of any Merino wool garment available, making them ideal for use during varying levels of activity – at any time of year. The open structure of the fabric means sweat can escape but body heat is kept next to the skin.

The winner will also receive two Nikwax cleaning products designed to care for technical underwear and baselayers: BaseWash and BaseFresh, worth £3.99 each.

To find out more go to aclima.no and nikwax.co.uk



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£57!

DECEMBER ISSUE WINNER

In OP186 we asked you to name the rock formation in the photograph. The correct answer is:

c) Pulpit Rock, Norway

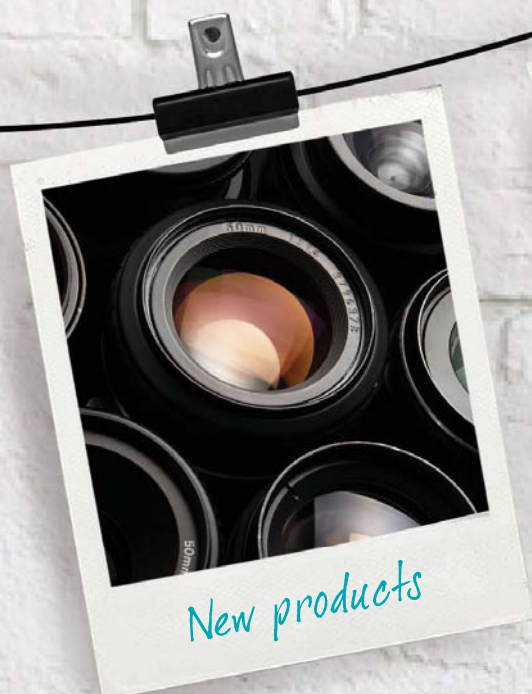


The winner of the Keen Revel II winter boots is Janet Rowley, who entered via email. Congratulations, your prize is on its way!

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